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Positioning, power and the construction of knowledge in groupwork in a graduate second language teacher education course.

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POSITIONING, POWER AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN GROUPWORK IN A GRADUATE SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE

A Dissertation Presented

by

MARGARET R. HAWKINS

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER EDUCATION: THE APPROPRIATION OF

DISCOURSE AND IDENTITY

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This thesis is an ethnographic case study of a graduate language teacher education classroom which privileges constructivist perspectives and pedagogies. It is an account of how learning and interaction work in such classrooms, based on a close study of a particular group of students who were collaboratively engaged in a semester-long project in which they conducted an analysis of a high school ESL classroom.

The conceptual framework describes a complex environment, in which students must negotiate new language, concepts, and ways of learning. They are asked not only to espouse new theories, but to take them on in practice. My contention is that the single most challenging aspect in this new workspace is

that of coming to define roles, hierarchies, and even learning in new ways. A good part of the analysis is tracking exactly how participants go about doing this.

One major finding is that much of the negotiating that occurred centered on issues of "authority" and "expertise," as students attempted to locate these within this new environment. Group members came to take on specific public identities within the group, and it was from these that they made contributions and knowledge claims. The identities from which they spoke, the forms of language they used, and the sorts of evidence they provided for their claims determined whether or not their contributions were incorporated into the group discourse. Participants who were more closely aligned with academic practices and values held more authority; those who could not and/or did not engage in ways that had recognizable allegiance to academic discourses were marginalized. And, despite the fact that the participant structure would seem to mute the professor's voice, the ultimate authority was in fact granted to texts that the group identified as representative of her.

This study is a close look at the workings of power and status within a pedagogy that promotes equity and inclusion. It points to a need for deeper understandings in areas where languages, cultures, and identities converge and are represented (and embedded) in social interaction.

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INTRODUCTION

Vygotsky has argued, famously, that people's minds are "furnished" through social interaction: "Any higher mental function was external [and] social before it was internal. It was once a social relationship between two people" (Vygotsky 1960a: p 197, cited and translated in Minick 1987: p 21). Today, many people from a variety of different perspectives argue that learning is not primarily a matter of being "told" things (explicit instruction), but a matter of being immersed in experiences and social interactions through which one comes to think, act, value, and believe in new ways, in ways that converge on the norms and social practices of new communities of people, whether these be socially, culturally, or academically defined. This perspective on learning raises deep questions about how these processes can work in classrooms, which have traditionally been centered on transmission of information and not immersion in experiences and social practices.

Teachers who accept the view of mind and learning portrayed here tend to develop practices of collaborative education, peer-peer interaction, and methods that distribute knowledge, skills, and responsibilities across people and groups. They value the knowledge and expertise that their learners already have, and engage in practices designed to both promote the learners' value of self, and to support learners in having access to (and valuing) each others' ideas and experiences. They structure classroom environments based upon the

premise that learning occurs through actively applying concepts through social interaction. These practices and views have been given various labels, such as constructivist learning, progressive approaches, and Whole Language perspectives. All have certain theoretical bases in common, but thus far there is no agreement on pedagogical implications. How, exactly, should learning environments be structured? What counts as knowledge? What is the goal, and the role, of the teacher? The list of questions is endless. Nonetheless, many teachers (especially at the K-12 level) are restructuring their classrooms, and trying new approaches.

These approaches typically are centered on task-based, collaborative work, in which heterogeneous groups of students come together to complete a task that the teacher has set. And in negotiating the process and content of the task, they come to make meaning of the material, as well as "learning how to learn." There are, however, intrinsic tensions in creating new sorts of workspaces and roles, when learners (and teachers) come grounded in other paradigms.

One of the major debates in the field of education today is that between constructivist pedagogies and explicit instruction. The crux of the debate is this: when students come together to "negotiate" and "collaboratively explore", they propose and recycle notions they hold, or come to discover. However, in all academic disciplines, there is a privileged way of talking, seeing, exploring, and making knowledge claims. Certain ideas and "knowledge" are privileged, as

well. And it is highly unlikely that a group of learners will be able to come to these privileged behaviors and concepts on their own, unless these are directly represented in the group, and in a way that ensures the reproduction of their privileged status. Therefore, while learners engaged in Whole Language practices might sharpen critical thinking skills, and better learn to learn, they are often at a disadvantage as their schooling progresses, because they have not been normed into the privileged practices of the academic disciplines. One of the sharpest, and best known, critiques comes from Lisa Delpit (1995), who claims that these practices further marginalize children from diverse language, ethnic, and academic backgrounds (those who already are marginalized by mainstream practices), because they do not come from backgrounds where they've been immersed in standard language and academic practices, and these sorts of pedagogies "hide" the rules. She claims that these students most need to be explicitly told what the knowledge, practices and behaviors are that will buy them entry into mainstream academics.

Another group (or actually several groups) attacking these perspectives are the genre theorists (e.g. Cope and Kalantzis 1993; Swales 1990) who argue, similarly to Delpit, that there are multiple academic genres, and students who are the most "successful" academically are those who have mastered them, and who have the knowledge to employ the appropriate one at the appropriate time, in the appropriate ways. They, too, argue that mainstream students are at an advantage, having gotten certain ways of communicating and perspectives

"for free" in their environment. And to deny explicit awareness of, and instruction in, the various genres to students lessens the likelihood of their successful participation in academic contexts.

Critical of all progressive stances are the critical pedagogists, who feel that these sorts of practices are not politicized enough (e.g. Giroux & McLaren 1986; Apple 1985, 1990). The argument is similar to Delpit's, in that they feel that constructivist pedagogies do nothing to empower students from diverse backgrounds. They argue that issues of power, oppression, and social justice should be built into the curriculum, so that students come to see how they can use education to improve their own lives, and make a more just and equitable society. This is not, however, antithetical, in fact many Whole Language advocates are moving toward this perspective, also (see Edelsky 1996).

While I will be concerned, in this thesis, with these critiques of constructivist and other progressivist pedagogies, I will also be concerned with another sort of critique. Constructivist pedagogies often appeal to Vygotsky's notion of a "Zone of Proximal Development" in which teachers or more expert peers collaborate with "apprentices" (students or less expert peers) to mediate new forms of interaction, thinking, and language which the apprentice comes to "internalize". Vygotsky saw this process in rather apolitical terms, almost as a form of ideologically and politically unproblematic "transmission" of the rationality of academic discourses (what Vygotsky called "scientific concepts"). This thesis will deal with the fact that, in reality, the collaborations that take place in

constructivist pedagogies and that help students work within their various and different zones of proximal development, are bound up with the workings of power and ideology in ways that often go unacknowledged in constructivist theory and practice (and, indeed, in wider applications of Vygotsky's ideas).

For my thesis, I have chosen to investigate a specific graduate teacher education classroom, which was structured to help inservice and preservice teachers explore these constructivist pedagogies. The professor operated from the belief that the use of transmission pedagogies to teach about constructivist practices is contradictory; that learners need to be immersed (with support) in the (collaborative, task-based, experiential) sorts of environments that the course promoted (at the appropriate academic and intellectual levels). The expectation was that students would be able to collaboratively struggle, debate, and critique, but in the end their perspectives and choices would be informed by their lived experience, not from an outside opinion.

In attempting to reflect on the construction and workings of these new sorts of workspaces within her classes, the professor engaged in several research studies with graduate students, each having a different focus. In a study prior to this one (Bailey 1993), the findings were encouraging as to the group interactions and ways of working collaboratively, but pointed to a need for the group to better address the "academic content." The researcher hypothesized that the group needed more explicit guidance by the professor to make use of the academic resources available. This course, then, was designed

to explore new ways to provide such guidance within the collaborative task-based practices.

My primary interest is in examining (and defining), at a micro-level, the "learning" that went on. Where was expertise represented in this classroom (both by the professor's design, as well as that recognized by the learners)? What was it that got explored and negotiated? Where did specific concepts and language come from? What were the processes and content of the construction of the group discourse? What roles did participants take on? Were participants marginalized, and, if so, how exactly did that happen? It seems to me that until we better understand the dynamics of such structures, we cannot adequately substantiate the larger theoretical claims.

This particular classroom, as a graduate ESL/Bilingual teacher education class, confronts these questions in a particularly dramatic and important way. People in ESL and bilingual education come to the classroom from a variety of quite different backgrounds and, furthermore, tend to have more discrepancies in age, background, academic preparation, and experience than "apprentices" in some other areas of academics. Surely teachers in these fields, in particular, ought to have skills and deep understandings in areas where languages, cultures, and identities converge, and are represented and embedded in social interactions. How can such learners use language and social interaction to "furnish" each others' minds with ways of thinking, valuing, knowing and

believing relevant to becoming teachers? And what is the nature of their learning?

The answers to these questions, as part of a more in-depth understanding of these "new" perspectives and tools for education, will hopefully help to inform all teachers and teacher educators as they make decisions about the curriculum, structure, and procedures in their classrooms, especially as our learners and world become more and more diverse.

CHAPTER 1

FRAMING THE STUDY

This project is an ethnographic study undertaken in a graduate second language teacher education classroom. This classroom is structured in a non-traditional way, based on certain theoretical constructs and beliefs about the nature of language, learning and teaching. Though I, for the most part, share these beliefs, and this study is not intended to empirically assess their validity, the thesis will engage in reflection on these beliefs that at times involves critique, especially from a sociocultural and political perspective. My interest is in the negotiations and interactions of the participants in this class, and the discourse they come to construct. In this section, I will explore the meanings and interrelationships of some of the underlying theories and assumptions upon which this class is based, as well as those which inform and influence my own thinking and my study. I will take up issues of language, learning, and social interaction, and discuss the ways in which they are intrinsically interdependent.

Communities of Learners

The pedagogy on which the class I study is based is part of a paradigmatic shift that revolves around the notion of "communities of practice" (Lave 1996; Lave & Wenger 1991) or "communities of learners" (Rogoff 1984, 1990; Brown 1993). While these two terms come from slightly different, but

related, traditions, the distinctions have little bearing on my work, and I will, for the most part, use these terms interchangeably.

The usefulness here is that we can come to conceptualize "learning" in a manner uniquely different than that which is implicit in the traditional transmission approach to teaching (i.e. that learning is a process of being able to memorize and repeat decontextualized bits of information), or that assumed by various individualist versions of progressivist learner-centered pedagogies (i.e. that learners learn best by setting their own goals and through immersion in activities). Rogoff (1994) criticizes both of these approaches for being "one-sided," and argues that a community of learners assumes a theory that "learning occurs as people participate in shared endeavors with others, with all playing active but often asymmetrical roles" (p 209).

Rogoff further stresses the importance of the "ongoing transformation of roles and understanding in the sociocultural activities in which one participates" (p 210). Lave (1996) agrees, setting out a notion of learning as social and collective, where "...learning is an aspect of changing participation in changing "communities of practice" everywhere" (p 150). Both Rogoff and Lave, then, combine the active role of the teacher (and "more expert peers") from traditional pedagogies and the immersion in practice characteristic of progressivist pedagogies, and add to this mix a collaborative, sociocultural component, that is, a "community" within which practices are shared, distributed, and transformed.

Both views posit learning as the effect of participation in communities of practice, with participants in the communities taking on various and different ("asymmetrical") roles, roles which very often change over time. Furthermore, part of what makes the community a community is that these roles are "distributed," that is, that they supplement and complement each other such that the group "knows" more and can accomplish more than any one of its members. In this sense, then, too, knowledge (both knowledge that and knowledge how) is distributed across the whole community and not the possession of any one student, nor the teacher herself.

By this approach, understanding comes through the acquisition of concepts developed through activity, but concepts that function to allow people to participate with others to achieve more than they can on their own--not concepts as sufficient unto themselves and not concepts as detached from practice. Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989) discuss the relationships between activity, perception, and conceptualization, and posit that concepts come to be understood through continued, situated use in situated and collaborative practices. Those concepts are then recast as they are applied to and within different situations, thus continually evolving and becoming more densely textured. The implications of this are crucial: nothing is ever "learned" or "known" in a final form; meanings and understandings are not static--they continually change and develop over time; and learning is the process of using, testing, and recasting concepts in joint practice with others and in confrontation

with the material world in an effort to broaden and strengthen both our understandings and our abilities to participate more deeply and extensively in the practices of the communities to which we belong.

This view places the emphasis on collaborative activity as the medium through which we learn, and highlights the social processes through which we pass in accomplishing our tasks as central, instead of defining learning as the endpoint of the task itself. The valued skills, concepts, and beliefs are embedded in the nature of the tasks and problems we confront and the social practices within which these are embedded. Lave, in fact, originally theorized "communities of practice" from a study she conducted of Vai and Gola tailors (in a system of apprenticeship), and lists some of the many "lessons" the apprentices were learning (Lave 1996: p 151):

> To name a few: they were learning relations among the major social identities and divisions in Liberian society which they were in the business of dressing. They were learning to make a life, to make a living, to make clothes, to grow old enough, and mature enough to become master tailors, and to see the truth of the respect due to a master of their trade.

Lave's points here make it clear, too, that, by this approach, what people learn within communities of practice are rarely just "facts". Rather, what is learned is always a compendium of physical, social, cultural, and political facts, affect, attitudes, beliefs, and values. Cognition and affect, mind and society, knowledge and identity are not separable in this approach.

In working collaboratively to solve problems we utilize all the resources we have, both within ourselves (i.e. previous knowledge and experiences, cognitive strategies, and existing skills and beliefs) and without (i.e. other people, institutions, and materials as sources of information). Activities are not decontextualized, they involve goals and purposes, which are always set within (and reflect) specific social and cultural contexts, and are tied to the practices and histories of the community within which they are located.

This view of learning-in-community, then, sees meaning and social relationships as interdependent (Lemke 1995), with members coming to take on knowledge, practices, behaviors, and views through prolonged sustained interactions with others. There is, of course, a very real danger here, namely that people can be "indoctrinated" into the beliefs, values, and practices of the community through processes of embodied socialization that involve little overt reflection (Gee, Hull & Lankshear 1996). Furthermore, many communities, especially ones formed around themes like "this is how we do things here," are not open to much critique, certainly not from "apprentices," and often not from "insiders" (whose membership status is often signaled, in part, by the fact that they do not engage in such critique). This danger should alert us to look for the presence (or absence) and role of meta-reflection and critique within communities of practice (and across the different ones to which people belong). This will be one of the critical themes of this thesis.

Zone of Proximal Development

The view of learning (and, by extension, classrooms) which I have been discussing positions learners as active participants, engaged as members of a community working together in the task of co-constructing meanings and understandings. The requisite ideas, information, experiences, and cognition are distributed amongst the members of the community, ready to be drawn upon when needed at the appropriate time, for the specific purpose, within a specific context (see Brown 1993).

Lev Vygotsky, a pioneer in research on the socio-cultural nature of cognition, studied the developmental cognitive processes of children. He coined the term "zone of proximal development (ZPD)," which he defined as the difference between the child's current level of "actual development as determined by independent problem solving" and the next level of "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1934: p. 86). The process of learning occurs through engagement in collaborative and scaffolded activities that allow learners to interact within their ZPD, that level adjacent to their current one to which they have access with the necessary support and guidance.

Within a community of learners, then, members have different zones of proximal development and take on different roles appropriate to their different zones. And those roles may vary by task or activity, since one's zone of proximal development is not fixed, but can vary with different tasks, problem

spaces, and domains. Within a community of learners, each member holds different skills, abilities, experiences, views, etc. Any of these may be privileged contributions during a specific task/interaction, and any of these may be the support needed by others (or an other), at any given time, for them to move through their zone of proximal development. When we view classrooms as communities of learners working together to explore meanings, all the expertise and knowledge represented in the collective is theoretically available to others at any time. And each member can feel that they are (at some time) a valuable and contributing member (a "teacher," or "expert"). This is not to say that in any community, certain views, abilities, ideas, and experiences are not privileged, that is, granted more (or less) status. But it is in the negotiation of the similarities and disparities that learning occurs.

James Wertsch, a social psychologist, has done extensive work in interpreting and applying Vygotsky's work. Wertsch claims that human action (including mental action) and sociocultural settings are mutually constitutive. Wertsch uses the term "mediation" to indicate the ways in which new information, ideas, and experiences come to be represented within the learner's zone of proximal development, and talks about "how tools and signs mediate human action" (1985; 1994). Mediational means include language and technical tools, but other semiotic tools and systems as well ("... algebraic symbol systems, works of art, writing, schemes, diagrams, maps..." etc.) (1994). Wertsch claims that mediational means are, "...carriers of sociocultural patterns

and knowledge," and stresses the ways in which Vygotsky's work focused on how the process of "mastering mediational means" (p 204) led learners to incorporate the historical and sociocultural meanings within which these mediational means (tools) were formed and which they carry with them (but the learner always has the potential to transform these meanings, as well). Vygotsky's definition of human agency, in fact, was "individuals operating within mediational means" (quoted in Wertsch 1994: p 205).

What Wertsch and Vygotsky are saying here, then, is that language (which is composed of "tools") is shaped by history, the sociocultural groups who have used it, and the institutions within which it has been used. In using the "tools" we can accomplish more than we can alone (in fact, for Wertsch the unit of analysis is "person-in-an-activity-with-a-tool" as an integral whole with its own "powers"). But what we accomplish-- the meanings we make and the practices we carry out-- is always in part determined by the historical, institutional, and sociocultural meanings (interests, values, identities) carried by the tool. Latour (1994), in a nice example of how "tools" can incorporate institutional meanings, refers to speed bumps as "concrete policemen," noting that they incorporate the power of the state into both the material environment and the practices we carry out in regard to it). This, too, will be a major theme of this thesis.

Ideologies

We have already mentioned the danger that communities of practice, because learning is achieved through socialization in collaborative practice, may not be very reflective about or critical of their own practices and values. It must be noted that neither Vygotsky nor those who argue for notions of communities of practice/learners place much emphasis on the ways in which status, power, and cultural diversity function in and affect collaborative interactions, nor mediation within people's zones of proximal development. Rogoff, in fact, claims that, "a central qualification to participate skillfully (in a community of learners) is the willingness and ability to align oneself with the directions in which the group is moving." (1994: p 219)

The argument that is central to this thesis is that coming to take on the valued views, language and practices of a community is not, then, unproblematic. Communities are "system(s) of interdependent social practices" (Lemke 1995: p 9) and these practices are embedded in, and reflect, the ideologies of the community. Lemke provides the following "insight (from) the concept of ideology":

> ...there are some very common meanings we have learned to make, and take for granted as common sense, but which support the power of one group to dominate another" (p. 2).

In coming to take on unexamined, noncritical views, language and behaviors, we perpetuate the existing inequalities and power relations of the community. I will return to this point, which will be a major interest of this thesis, shortly.

Discourse and Discourse Communities

The term "discourse" is widely used in multiple academic disciplines, and takes on many different meanings (Macdonell 1986). For, some, it simply means ways of using language (in speech or writing) that are infused with certain historically formed and institutionally sustained themes, values, perspectives on people and the world, and political interests. Others want to add in, beyond "ways with words," social practices, people's identities and ways of thinking, feeling, and valuing, as well as the meanings physical objects and human artifacts take on within specific social practices.

Lemke (1995), who summarizes some of the various approaches to the notion of "discourse" and "discourses", defines discourse as, "the social activity of making meanings with language and other symbolic systems in some particular kind of situation or setting" (p 6). This is a useful beginning, as it begins to uncover the situated, semiotic, and social nature of communication. He claims another usage, however, in speaking about:

> ...particular kinds of discourses... which are produced as the result of certain social habits that we have as a community. There are particular subjects some of us are in the habit of

> talking about in particular ways, often as part of particular sorts of social activity (p. 7).

This, then, renders transparent the ways in which discourses are social habits and practices, tied into and comprising the language, views, and ideologies of a given community. Bakhtin (1986) makes a similar point in discussing "speech genres," that "...we use them ...skillfully in practice, and it is quite possible for us not even to suspect they exist" (p. 78). In other words, we learn and use in practice, and come to embody and represent, ideologies and views (bound up in language and practice) that we have taken on without being aware of them.

Cummins & Sayers (1995: p 93) propose a related definition of discourse:

> ...the way in which language is used to create what is generally accepted as "common sense," thereby orchestrating consent for initiatives that are in the interest of particular groups. Thus, discourses are intimately linked to patterns of power relations in a society. In fact, they constitute the predominant means of both establishing and resisting power and status relations among social groups. ... They constitute what can be thought and what counts as truth or knowledge.

Here we return to issues of power and status, and the ways in which communities reproduce and perpetuate existing relationships.

James Gee (1990) has proposed a definition of Discourse (for which he uses a capital "D"), that begins to get at the ways in which language and other human, material, and social non-verbal components of practice are interrelated. Gee's approach deals, as well, with the subject of what we come to take on as

"apprentices" to new practices and communities, and he proposes dynamic relationships between communities, ideologies, and identities. He defines Discourse (with a capital D) as:

> ...a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group... (p 143).

In subsequent work (e.g. Gee 1996a), under the influence of Latour (e.g. 1991), Gee has stressed the ways in which people recognize what is being done (social activities) and who is doing it (social actors with socially situated identities) through coordinating and getting coordinated by other people, objects, tools, and ways of acting, interacting, feeling, valuing, and using language (all of which are seen as "actants") in socioculturally distinctive ways. From this perspective, social action and interaction are like a dance (of people, things, tools, and language) that, in its coordination of elements, takes on a particular set of historical and sociocultural meanings or values (see Jeannot 1997). To be an African American of a certain sort or a physicist of a certain sort or a teacher educator of a certain sort is to be able to engage in, and recognize, certain coordinations (dances), coordinations in which the person is both active (coordinating other actants, that is other people, things, words, tools, and technologies) and passive (getting coordinated by them).

As individuals, we are members simultaneously of many Discourses. These may be socio-economically defined, culturally defined, or bound together

by common profession, activities, or interests. Discourses allow us to be recognized as certain "types" (kinds) of people (e.g. “troubled middle class spoiled teenager") doing certain "types" of things (e.g. "acting out").

Gee takes up the issue of apprenticeship (and inherent ideologies), as well. He claims that explicit “learning” of the ways-with-words and practices of a Discourse are not enough to become a fully participating member. He uses the example of a biker bar: simply being in the “right” place (i.e. the bar), using the “right” language, taking on the “right” material props (i.e. bike, tattoos, etc.), and carrying out the “right” practices (i.e. riding, drinking) do not buy entry into the Discourse. The actions, appearances, language and material goods interact with worldviews and ideologies in complex ways to constitute the Discourse, and “imitating” certain aspects not only doesn’t ensure acceptance and the ability to participate fully, it may in fact prohibit it by incurring resistance and hostility.

Discourses are in part defined by their differences from, and resistance to, other Discourses. And Discourses, like societies, are shaped by, and reflect, the values, beliefs, and ways of being and acting of their individual members. They also, conversely, shape and mold these values, beliefs, and ways of being and acting. In viewing the reciprocity of this process, however, we realize that Discourses are not fixed. They are carried on and perpetuated by their members. And with each new member comes a new interpretation of the Discourse. In every new viewing, internalizing, and passing on of values and beliefs they are renegotiated and recast within a new framework of

understanding. Discourses are dynamic, and change constantly as new members contribute new resources, interpretations and insights.

As Discourses transform themselves throughout history via human interaction with various tools and technologies, they can borrow from other Discourses, hybridize with other Discourses, split apart into new Discourses, or simply die out. New Discourses can arise by social processes that are not unlike pidginization and creolization in the case of languages. Discourses are ultimately the conjunction of the meanings humans come to attribute to each other and their various interactions with other people, as well as with various places, symbols, tools, technologies, and other objects.

If we frame our discussion of learning and interacting in terms of Gee's Discourse, one crucial implication is that we need to look beyond language alone when analyzing the construction of knowledge and workings of human collaboration. The "product" groups come to in classrooms based on constructivist pedagogies are embedded in and reflect beliefs, ideologies, and practices, in addition to ways of using language. And the use of language, and other communicative tools, reflects specific socially situated identities. We can view our community of learners as members of multiple Discourses, each of which has its own ways of thinking, acting, and believing. They have come to mutually negotiate a new Discourse space (in this case, around issues of language, teaching, and learning), for which the aspects represented in the environment (the "mediational tools," in Wertsch's language) come not only from

the Discourses the members represent (academic discourses, educational discourses, sociocultural discourses, etc.), but with specific aspects, or pieces, represented in (and representational of) the texts, the institution itself, and the communities in which the practices take place. Many of these Discourses are conflicting. My interest is in looking closely at what transpires when multiple Discourses are represented in an "uncharted" space-- that is, when multiple aspects of multiple Discourses are represented in a specific space, where people come together for specific purposes, which creates a need to negotiate (or possibly integrate) differing sociocultural language, practices, identities, and ideologies, but always within a particular sociocultural setting.

Status and Power

From the perspective of discourses (or "Discourses"), power and knowledge are not separable (Foucault 1980). Knowledge is a form of power, and power (in differing guises) sustains and enforces various claims to know and to see the world in certain ways. Power is a social construction, which privileges certain ideas, relationships, and meanings while disempowering, or marginalizing, others:

> Discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations (Ball 1990: p 2).

A community is made up of its members. But members have different roles to play within that community, and all roles are not granted equal status. Elizabeth Cohen (1994) has focused on the intra-group dynamics of groupwork (collaboration) in schools, and identified status within the group as a determining factor in who speaks and who gets heard. Within cooperative learning groups in classrooms, social status may be determined by students' cultural, economic, and/or linguistic background, as well as their academic standing (perceived academic ability). Those with lower status may not be able to find a voice (the ability to speak and be heard) within the group (see Bailey 1993). In her work, Cohen pre-assigns roles to group members to ensure that each participant has a contribution to make that is necessary to the completion of the task. Thus, group members must rely on (and listen to) all participants, and everyone has a voice. She finds that students (and teachers) can come to value previously undervalued classmates, and that underachieving students can come to see and value themselves as learners.

But the classroom community is situated among other institutions and communities, which are represented in the relationships and interactions within the class. And different institutions and communities privilege different views, ideas, beliefs, and behaviors, they have (and represent) different ideologies. Institutions of education, for example, reflect the dominant social view (of the society which they represent) of what "education" is, and what students need to know, and how they are to "learn" it. In a poststructural critique of education,

Cleo Cherryholmes (1988) claims that typical of the values underlying, and promoted by, standard educational practices are:

> ...control (of content, students and organization), quantification (of learning outcomes), individual accountability, order, authority of disciplinary knowledge, subject-centered learning, teacher authority, the status quo of social organizations, fragmentation of knowledge and information, appearance of certainty and stability of knowledge, ...authoritative knowledge viewed as a positive body of knowledge, and applied psychometrics in the service of education (p 46).

Schools are powerful institutions within our society. Virtually all of us have been socialized by, and into, educational practices and views that reflect the standards above, we have all been, to varying degrees, members of these sorts of educational Discourses. So these values have a doubly strong representation in a classroom community - through the texts and institutional practices, but, as well, through the participants present who have been enculturated into these views and ideologies. Where, then, is there room for practices that represent the task-based, exploratory, interactional view of learning that I have espoused? What happens when these discourses (or Discourses) collide? How can new practices and beliefs, represented through various mediational means, come to be acknowledged and granted social status, when the traditional ones have such a strong representation (grounded in societal and historical power structures)? How are new ways of believing and practicing appropriated into an education discourse, when they are in conflict with others represented (which carry more status and power in other spheres)?

Academic Discourse

Before turning to our actual examination of these questions, we will need to look more closely at one particular discourse-- academic discourse. This is the discourse privileged in the academy, and theorists have taken it up extensively, albeit under various names. Note, however, that academic theorists can only speak from an "insiders" perspective; that is, academic theorists have already been enculturated into an academic discourse community-- their vantage point is from within the discourse.

Scollon and Scollon, in their classic book on literacy and cross-cultural communication Narrative, Literacy and Face in Interethnic Communication (1981), introduced the now widely-used notion of "essayist literacy." Essayist literacy, which can be represented in spoken or written language, is language characterized by several closely related features:

a) the speaker/writer fictionalizes him or herself and the listener/reader; both are treated as abstract, general, non-culturally specific "reasonable" people, not as socially or culturally situated specific people;

b) the listener or reader is treated as a "stranger" with whom one shares only public, not personal knowledge;

c) connections between sentences (and other linguistic units) are stressed, rather than connections between people (e.g. speaker/writer--listener/reader);

d) meaning is built explicitly into the text and not left to inferences to be drawn based on shared knowledge, other than the knowledge "reasonable," "public" people are assumed to share,

e) meanings are formulated at a relatively abstract level, removed from the details of personal experience;

f) conveying "information," rather than affect, attitude, or social bonding, is assumed to be the primary goal of communication; and

g) authority is rooted in "fact," "logic," "reason," and public, secular, "rational" texts, not in one's role, relationships, or life experiences.

The language of essayist literacy draws on complex sorts of syntax in order to render meaning explicit, language-internal, "decontexualized," and abstract, with intra-textual connections clearly signaled. The Scollons use the term "essayist literacy" because they believe that the essay epitomizes the norms, practices, and values (in thinking and language) of essayist literacy. It is, they argue, the historical "high point" of this form of literacy. Essayist literacy is also the form of language practice that is central to formal, Western style schooling.

While the Scollons focus mostly on form, Cheryl Geisler (1994) claims that what she terms "academic literacy" has two components, "domain content" and "rhetorical process" that "..shape the distinct activities and representations used by academic experts" (p xiii). And Patricia Bizzell (1992) addresses what she terms as "academic discourse," and defines an academic discourse community as:

> ...a group of people who share certain language-using practices (that are) conventionalized in two ways. Stylistic conventions regulate social interactions both within the group and in its dealings with outsiders... (and) canonical knowledge regulates the worldview of groupmembers, how they interpret experience (p 222).

In general, "academic literacy," or "academic discourse," adds the following features to those the Scollons' have articulated:

a) the "fictionalized" (abstract) identities of, and the knowledge assumed to be shared by, writers/speakers and listeners/readers rooted in disciplinary-based, specialized knowledge developed by "experts";

b) arguments grounded in appeals to facts, technologies, and principles rooted in disciplinary-based research or in appeals to "experts" attached to this research;

c) surface meanings to be understood by appeal to "deeper" or "underlying" ones, as well as general and abstract principles;

d) knowledge broken down into its analytical parts and reconstructed from them (a form of "reductionism");

e) the experiences that one has had which "count" as grounds for claims to know are only those rooted in disciplinary-based (or "academic") practices, whether reading, classes, talks, or research, not personal, nor culturally specific experiences.

Of course, the "decontextualized" nature of essayist literacy, both in form and content, is ideological. All language is situated within the shared contexts and social practices of the people who use it in socioculturally specific ways. And essayist literacy stresses meanings and connections drawn on the basis of shared experiences and mutual knowledge. It operates, in fact, identically to other discourses, wherein one learns the rules and appropriate ways of enactment by being exposed to, and immersed in, its practices. And, again as with other discourses, it separates the “knowers” from the uninitiated, this time with powerful consequences, because this discourse shapes how we define “knowing” and “knowledge,” and who counts as “literate.” By masquerading its practices and privileged “knowledge” as decontextualized, academic discourse:

> "...ask(s) students to leave their personalized knowledge at the classroom door and move instead into a world of decontextualized facts. Academic knowledge and contextualized understanding are taken to be at odds." (Geisler 1993: p 29).

The implications of this are that students who come from backgrounds where they have not had exposure to, nor immersion in, academic discourse (and its requisite language and practices) are not seen as having "knowledge." Their life experiences do not "count." And the infrastructure of the discourse, itself, prohibits any challenge to this status quo. As Geisler notes:

> ..the only individuals with sufficient access to a discipline's domain content to make arguments are those who have already pledged their allegiance to the discipline's assumptions. (p xiii)

Geisler argues, as well, that:

> Current discourse conventions... do not acknowledge a multiplicity of perspectives. In fact, disciplinary communities are organized to eliminate this multiplicity. Consensus is created not by persuasion but by disciplinary indoctrination. (p xiii)

What people are assumed to share in essayist literacy, or academic discourse, is a public, rational, and non-cultural specific knowledge typical of modern, secular, scientifically and technologically influenced societies, not personal or culturally specific knowledge. The "expertise" resides in the conventions and texts that are representative of the discourse, and, without

access to these, one cannot have the knowledge or language to have a voice that counts, or can be heard. This, then, serves to perpetuate the power relations that currently exist, and to marginalize learners from nontraditional backgrounds.

Before leaving this topic, we need to look a bit further at the culture-bound nature of academic literacy. The Scollons contrast essayist literacy, and the worldview with which they associate this form of literacy, with the language and literacy practices (and their concomitant worldview) of Athabaskans (a group of Native Americans in Canada and Alaska, as well as elsewhere in North America). Athabaskans assume it is proper to write or speak only to those one already knows; that it is wrong to impose views or information on people that they have not indicated a need for; that the important connections in language are between people communicating with each other; that it is rude to tell people explicitly what they can infer for themselves; that it is wrong to "fictionalize" a relationship that is not true for the people who are actually communicating; that "superiors" (e.g. teachers) should talk and "inferiors" (e.g. students) remain silent; that information should be based on, and usable in, experience, not abstract and general; and that narratives should be short, thematic, and somewhat "cryptic," so that others can fill out the story and morals for themselves. The Athabaskans' language and literacy practices are connected to a form of (non-modern) consciousness that stresses social relationships, group membership, cultural tradition, not imposing on people or being imposed on by

them, learning from watching (rather than analysis), and carrying in one's head only knowledge that can be used in concrete experience.

It is easy to see how the Athabaskan forms of literacy, as well as their worldview, are antithetical to those which dominate our schooling practices, and our notion of academic discourse. Surely this points to the contextual and cultural nature of our practices. Yet our classrooms are composed of students from multiple backgrounds and discourses, and the traditions of these classrooms leave little room for their voices and experiences to be validated or utilized.

This, then, brings us back full-cycle to the issues already articulated. There is an explicit tension in our classrooms, based on the very nature of education in our society. If we assume that the purpose of schooling is to apprentice students to academic discourse and disciplinary knowledge, and if these, by definition, marginalize students and voices from diverse backgrounds, how do we "educate" and "empower" simultaneously? That is, how do we immerse students into cultural practices while enabling them to take critical (and sometimes resistant) stances? How do we incorporate other language, practices, worldviews, and values into an exclusive discourse? Bizzell argues for:

> ...teach(ing) academic discourse in this way: by emphasizing its culture-bound properties, as the language of a particular community with a particular history and current socioeconomic and political interests. Thus academic discourse is not allowed to masquerade as the clearest or most rational or most efficient form of language use, to the detriment

> of the students' home languages, and the students are encouraged to relativize their acquisition of academic discourse, to see it as one more addition to their discursive repertoires, useful for specific purposes, rather than see it as a means of growing up or learning to think (1992: p 20).

The classroom which this study investigates had an allegiance to a particular sort of academic discourse. The pedagogy which it embraced specifically articulated norms and values that included empowering learners, valuing diversity and diverse perspectives, and using learners' existing knowledge and experiences as resources. Yet the classroom had a specific design, and specific practices, rooted in part in a specific discipline, which privileged certain language and practices (and, indeed, expected the students to engage in these), and represented certain values and beliefs as well (i.e. about education; and the value of diversity). One of the major themes in this study is the conflict between academic and nonacademic discourses, and how this conflict plays out in a specifically situated educational practice.

Research Questions

In this section I have articulated many of my (and others', as well) viewpoints and beliefs about the interrelationships of language (and other forms of communication), meanings, institutions, histories, ideologies, identities, power relations, and schooling. My study explores one particular collaborative group in a graduate classroom, and the ways in which the discourse and dynamics

develop and evolve over the course of one semester. In order to make this a manageable task, I have formulated the following questions to guide my research:

1) What was the nature of the discourse constructed?

This first question is extremely broad and general, by design. My intention is to describe, as fully as possible, the content and structure of the group discourse, and to track its evolution. I will locate the topics that are being discussed, and the sources and resources ("mediational tools") that are drawn upon and appropriated. I will explore which, out of the represented ideas, ideologies, beliefs, and practices, are taken up (and which aren't), and what the dynamics are that shape this. I will, as well, attempt to identify the role (or influence) of the social, historical, and institutional setting and meanings attendant to the situated nature of the practice.

2) How do issues of status, power, and diversity play out in and affect interactions and negotiations, and the meanings and "knowledge" constructed by the group?

In the chapter above, I have claimed that current theories and critiques of constructivist and collaborative education have paid too little attention to issues of power and diversity. I have claimed, as well, that Vygotsky, and those who invoke him in the current resurgence of his work, have not adequately taken

these issues into account. In this study, especially because the learners come from such widely divergent backgrounds, I will take this up directly. I will look specifically at the interactions and interrelationships among group members, to try to locate the Discourses they represent, and the roles and positions they negotiate in the group. I will look, also, at the contributions group members make, including the underlying assumptions and ideologies, and the ways in which these contributions impact the group discourse, to determine the relationship between the roles and positions group members hold and the reactions of the group to their contributions. If, indeed, meaning is mediated through peers, and group members' prior experiences and knowledge are to be valued in this environment, and used as mediational tools, we need to explore whether the members' specific information and background come to "count" and be heard equally, or whether some of these "tools" are granted status, while others are marginalized.

A subquestion within the topic of status and power relations is the role (and impact) of experiential contextualized "knowledge" (as represented by groupmembers), as opposed to the "rational," decontextualized, "expert" knowledge traditionally privileged by the academy. While this particular course claims to place value on experiential knowledge, nonetheless groupmembers have been enculturated into traditional educational discourses, and have learned how to learn in traditional educational environments, where academic discourse is privileged, and holds higher status. Here, they are faced with a

conflicting viewpoint and practice. I will pay particular attention to how this tension plays out.

3) How and where, in this particular model of apprenticeship to constructivist learning, were resistance and critique represented, and to what effect?

One of the central tensions which I have named is that between apprenticeships to discourses, and critical or resistant stances to those discourses. In other words, the act of apprenticeship involves enacting, through word, value, and deed, participation in a discourse community. Through this, one comes to take on new language and practices, and new ways of viewing and believing, as well. But this implies a form of indoctrination, where becoming a fully participating member of the new discourse community necessarily means buying into all the requisite forms of seeing and doing, including ideologies. Taking a critical stance endangers ones status, and invites the risk of rejection. If one of the marks of being an "insider" is sharing implicitly in the traditions and practices, anything else immediately identifies an "outsider." Since only insiders hold status and power, one cannot simultaneously critique, and hold a position of authority from which to be heard.

Academic discourse, as discussed earlier, certainly privileges certain ways of communicating and thinking. Constructivist and collaborative educational pedagogies claim, as one of their benefits, to empower students from diverse backgrounds, who often come with non-mainstream practices,

views and uses of language. But academic discourse is one of the discourses represented in this educational environment. So one of my central concerns will be to explore what happens when these discourses compete in the same space. Do such students come to hold a position, and have a voice, in these collaborative groups, and are their "other" ways of viewing and valuing taken up, incorporated, and addressed?

In the next chapter I will provide the details necessary to contextualize the study, as we move from the general theory to the specific site. I will describe the course, the setting, the participants, my role, and the data, and the methods by which it was collected and analyzed.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The view of learning that I have proposed in my earlier framework makes the claim that knowledge work and meaning making are intrinsically social events-- they happen through social interaction, in specific social (historical and cultural) contexts. It follows, then, that research into learning and teaching must explore these social interactions. As Virginia Richardson (1994) notes, "Research on the practice of teaching has recently shifted from a focus on effective behaviors toward the hermeneutic purpose of understanding how teachers make sense of teaching and learning." My intention in this ethnographic account is to do a "thick description," in Geertz's (1973) terms, of the detailed interactions of one group of preservice and inservice teachers in a specific teacher education classroom, to explore and describe the work that is being done (socially and academically) that results in the "product:" defined, in this case, as the discourse, meanings and understandings the group has negotiated by the end of the semester. My hope is to come to a deeper understanding of how the complex interrelationships of all factors (talk, texts, settings, discourses, dynamics, tasks, etc.) impact and mold the evolving discourse of the group, and the educational beliefs and perceptions of group members. This, in turn, may shed some light on how teacher education (and

graduate classrooms) might more effectively be used to help teachers further explore and develop their conceptions of and reflections on their practice.

This chapter will provide a description of the classroom in which I conducted my study, and of the small group on which I focused. I will supply information on the environment, structure, and practice of this particular site. I will also discuss the specific methodologies and procedures I employed to collect and analyze data. This is meant to ensure that readers have a clear picture of the context in which the interactions and discourse I analyze occurred, and an overview of the procedures I followed, so that they may have a framework for interpreting and evaluating the study.

Site Description

The classroom in which my work was done was a graduate course entitled "Principles of Second Language Learning and Teaching." It was part of a program in a school of education in a large state university that focused on bilingual, ESL and multicultural teacher education. The course was a requirement for students obtaining ESL certification.

There were approximately twenty five students enrolled in this course. They were both preservice and inservice teachers, and represented many cultures and ethnicities. Some were native speakers of English, others were not. Some were seeking a Masters degree, others a Doctorate. They had varying amounts of previous graduate coursework. Some were interested in teaching

ESL, others in being bilingual teachers (at different levels, and of different content areas), and some in teaching in English in multicultural classrooms. Many had experience in American educational systems, some did not. As you can see, it was a diverse group.

Through multiple interactions over many years with the Professor of the course (Jerri Willett), it is apparent that she highly values the sorts of perspectives and practices which come under the rubric of "constructivist." Her rationale for the structure and activities that she designed for this course was that they were:

> set up to help teachers explore new practices that immerse learners, create new roles for them, and do not marginalize (anyone). ... An underlying belief is that explicit telling won't help prepare them for the new roles and practices- they need to be immersed (and supported while immersed) so that they struggle with the complexities. It is expected that they struggle. The struggle and debate, and critique, will be based on their own experience of new practices and roles rather than on an outsider's opinion of what it is like. It is understood that they may critique, reject, or take up these practices--but it will be from an informed view rather than from an uninformed position. Even if they do maintain the traditional practices of mainstream classrooms, it will not be a mere uninformed or unconscious reproduction. (pc)

This course was designed to create a community of learners, with a multiplicity of roles, supported to engage in a multiplicity of tasks (both collaboratively and individually) in the exploration of the theory and practice of language, learning, and teaching. Jerri had previously constructed courses with similar (constructivist) designs and participant structures, and wanted to pay particular attention in this class to addressing the academic content (issues of

second language acquisition), while continuing to explore inter- and intra-group dynamics. In order to do this, she implemented multiple components.

The course met weekly for 12 weeks, for 2 1/2 hours per session, and was organized around two main components. For the first ninety minutes, all participants met together, and focused on a topic pre-determined by the Professor. This I will call the large group meeting. These meetings combined lectures, whole group discussions, experiential activities, and sometimes small group work. Each topic had pre-assigned reading required. This part of the course largely addressed the theoretical issues related to second language learning and teaching, as well as provided modeling by the Professor as she articulated her views (as well as those of colleagues in the field), and examined her practices (see course syllabus, Appendix A). In her words:

> When I talked in class, I try to use "experiential language" with my own stories and eliciting the experiences of students in the class. I also tried to model struggling with these "languages" myself- which is why I talked to them about the assumptions behind my teaching. (I'm) constantly trying to negotiate this tension-- it really is a practice/theory connection I'm trying to forge. (pc)

The final sixty minutes of class time was reserved for small group meetings. It is the small group in which I participated that is the focus of my study. These groups were determined at the beginning of the semester by the Professor, who tried to balance the groups in terms of background and experience of the members.

> Multiability treatment (using the "resource" concept)- helping them to see one another as resources-- e.g. having them fill out cards with what I believed was relevant to the task- experience as a teacher, experience as a cross cultural person, experience as a second language learner-- even a "newcomer" was positioned as having a valuable perspective. (pc)

The task was the same for all groups: "...to analyze how learning is organized in a local ESL classroom and the underlying assumptions that govern this organization" (course syllabus, Appendix A). In order to do this, each group focused on one ESL classroom, explored practices in this classroom, analyzed them collaboratively, and prepared written analyses of four components: classroom interaction; learner performance; syllabus; and task design and implementation. Jerri's rationale for this component was:

> Collaborative work in small groups was designed so that peers could interact around and apply the concepts (presented in readings and in full-class discussions, activities and lectures) to the ESL classrooms they were studying and so they could begin using the academic language as well as their experiences to understand practice. By putting them in groups and having groups discuss, I was "privileging" their own ways of talking about experiences and classrooms, because they didn't yet have control of "academic language." Groups were heterogeneously grouped so that there was enough "expertise" in the group to actually do the task- "expertise" was not in one person but distributed within the group. ... I designed open-ended collaborative tasks with distributed "expertise" to create interdependence. The reason for the joint analysis of an ESL classroom and having them each read different "resource articles" so they had to rely on one another to get the information was to create this interdependence. The reason for the "open-endedness" was to have an opportunity to negotiate their own understandings. The reason for being collaborative was to provide more

> support than a teacher can give when the ratio is so bad (...almost 30-1). (pc)

Members of the group had multiple roles and responsibilities. In Jerri's words:

> ..I came up with the idea that if I named the role and delegated students the authority (Cohen) to insure that concepts were interwoven into the analyses, then students would be reluctant to ignore the theoretical concepts. (pc)

One group member took on the role of "cooperating teacher." This person had the responsibility for providing the data (from his/her classroom practice) that the group analyzed. Others were team members, responsible for participating in the analyses and writing them up. And one member had the role of "facilitator" (in my group, I was the facilitator). I focused on the group process itself, and was responsible for supporting and monitoring group interactions. Facilitators had the additional task of meeting regularly with all other facilitators, to discuss and explore the facilitation process.

Group members also had responsibilities outside of class. They either tutored an ESL learner, taught (or assisted) in a language classroom, were in the process of learning a foreign language, and/or researched the group process (usually the role of the facilitator). In this way, each student had a chance to simultaneously reflect on and analyze a personal experience, while being able to contribute this perspective to the group's analyses.

This small group component of the class was meant to provide students with opportunities to connect theory to practice- all the theory and reading from the class is operationalized as students immediately relate the knowledge, ideas and information to personal experience, and use it to collaboratively explore real classroom practices. Additionally, students are experiencing the processes that they are learning about as course content: collaborative learning, task-based learning, problem solving, etc.

There was one additional component. Each week, one group member attended a "tutorial" with a representative from each of the other groups and Jerri. This role rotated weekly. In these tutorials, the group would discuss and analyze the readings that the whole class would be reading the following week. Participants in the tutorial were then responsible for writing up their notes and information, and presenting the article to their groupmates. In this way, Jerri could be assured that difficult and dense readings had someone who could provide scaffolding, and that the students could come to make sense of the theories.

> Tutorials were devised as a way of insuring that someone in the group understood the concepts in a little more depth- the idea was that each member would need to stretch his or her understanding a little more by having to articulate the concepts to their group was pure Vygotsky. Also, it was a way to ensure that the quieter members (for whatever reason- culture, personality or experience) were given a platform to try out this academic language-- and because it was information the group needed, they might be more willing to pay attention to the quieter students rather than ignoring them. It wasn't intended that only the concept facilitator read the articles-- that was a creative way that students reduced their work load. ...We also discussed the concepts and did activities in the full

> class-- so that it wasn't the only access learners had to the concepts- it provided repeat opportunities for exposure to the academic language. By delegating the responsibility for getting these new concepts into the analytic discussions (not at the exclusion of their own ideas about classrooms), it was hoped that ...ignoring the difficult concepts didn't happen. It was not expected that every idea get discussed in the groups (just as they are not in full class discussions) and the idea that members talked about ideas that interested them is exactly what I hoped for-- not just the ideas that I had pointed out in the full class. Another purpose for the tutorials was so that I would have an opportunity to get to know the students better by meeting them in smaller groups. (Jerri Willett, pc)

My small group consisted of six members. As noted, I was assigned (by Jerri) the role of facilitator. The resources I brought to the role were that I was an advanced graduate student, who had worked in these sorts of environments in previous courses with Jerri. I also had some background in Second Language Acquisition, and in studying and researching constructivist theories and methodologies (although these last two weren't prerequisites). I will briefly describe the other five members of the group.

Ruth was finishing her Masters degree, as well as ESL certification. She was a white, middle-class woman, who had obtained her undergraduate degree at a prestigious private college. She was small, energetic, and articulate. She had completed her certification in social studies at the high school level, and therefore had done student teaching (in a large urban high school). Midway through the semester, she was hired as a full time ESL teacher in the town in which this University was located.

Carlos was beginning his work for his Masters degree in Multicultural Education. He had taken a few courses in this institution previous to this one. He was a Latino male, from New York City, and was bilingual. His manner was outgoing and friendly. His previous teaching experience consisted of three weeks of teaching in the New York City Public Schools. He had the role of cooperating teacher in this group, although he did not have his own classroom. He was, however, involved in a project for the University which placed him in a large urban high school on a weekly basis, so he enlisted one of the ESL teachers there to provide him access to one of her classes. He then represented this class to the group.

Kate was also a white, middle class female. She had been raised primarily in Hong Kong and Japan, although English was her primary (and only fluent) language. She was outgoing, thoughtful, and conscientious. Like Ruth, she had just obtained her social studies certification, and was working on ESL certification, and finishing her Masters degree. The student teaching she had done for social studies was her only formal teaching experience, although she had worked with immigrant populations in various capacities.

Huei Ling was Chinese, from mainland China. Her native language was Chinese. She was fairly proficient in English, although when she spoke there were semantic and syntactic errors. She did, however, fully follow and take part in group discussions. She was quiet, but extremely focused and thoughtful. She had been educated in China, and had come to the U.S. to attend graduate

school. She wanted to earn a Masters degree, and ESL certification, and was planning to return to China to teach. She had taught ESL in China previous to coming to the U.S.

Thanh was Vietnamese. Her first language was Vietnamese, and her English conversational skills (as far as could be ascertained) were poor. She seemed to have great difficulty following the group's conversations, although there is some evidence that she comprehended the readings. She rarely participated, mostly she listened. And it was difficult to interpret her meaning when did speak. She had grown up in Vietnam; I do not know the details of her schooling there. But she was employed as a bilingual teacher in a large urban high school (the same one that the classroom we studied was in), and had obtained her bilingual certification in the U.S. She was currently working toward ESL certification, she hoped to switch to an ESL classroom.

This, then, is an overview of the group members, their language and educational backgrounds, and previous teaching experience. The group met a total of 11 times, mostly before class in a classroom at the University, but twice at my house. The first time, we decided to this because we needed to watch a video, and it was simpler to use mine than to try to arrange for a VCR to be set up in the classroom at night. And the second time was at the end of the semester, when we needed an additional meeting, between classes, to finish our work.

All group members did not attend all meetings. As with any semester-long class, people were absent from time to time. But no one missed more than two meetings.

Data Collection

For this study, I was a full participant in the course, and had the "official" role of "facilitator" in one of the small groups which worked collaboratively for the semester. Of course, how this role actually got played out--and even whether it was played out at particular points--was a product of the moment to moment interaction of the group. In this sense, however, I was a participant-observer, with full access to the classroom culture and practices. This enabled me to observe, interact with other members, and collect data.

I attended all class and small group meetings, except one (when I was attending a conference). I also participated in four meetings throughout the semester with the other group facilitators, in which we discussed our groups and facilitation, and could compare our experiences, methods, and interpretations. I had full access to, and multiple conversations with, the professor of the course. There were multiple conversations, as well, with individual group members (outside of class and meeting times), both in person and by telephone. And I also had access to the classroom we were studying, both because I had previous professional connections with the teacher (she had been a graduate student of mine in another institution), and because I videotaped this class.

The setting and role(s) I have described above provided me with a rich supply of data. Although my primary focus is on the small group in which I participated, I will also use information from the other aspects of the class, to see how ideas and language from the readings, discussions, and interactions permeate the small group discourse. So part of my data consists of artifacts from the large group portion of the class. This includes all written material: course syllabus (Appendix A); Group Project Handout (Appendix B); all written communication from the Professor to students; all assigned articles and readings; tape recordings (and transcripts) of all class meetings; tape recordings of facilitator meetings; and field notes of class meetings and conversations (which occurred outside of class) with the Professor and other class members.

Data collected from the small group portion includes: tape recordings (and transcriptions) of all meetings; field notes from group meetings and other conversations with group members (often telephone and/or after-class conversations); the videotape and artifacts (syllabus, texts, samples of student work) from the ESL classroom that the group analyzed. Written artifacts also include: articles on the four topics handed out by Jerri; drafts and final copies of group analyses; and annotations of assigned readings done by group members (presented to and discussed by the group). Each group member was required to keep a weekly dialog journal with the facilitator. Although most did not honor this, the two that were done are available. And each student in the class was required to submit a final paper in which they "...articulate (their) developing

theory of instruction and illustrate how it is connected to practice..." (course syllabus). These, too, are part of the data.

These tapes, field notes, and written artifacts substantiate the recordings of the ongoing processes of negotiation that formed the group discourse. Together they represent all the venues of interaction between the group members (and other class members and texts) that are available to me, as researcher. From them, I reconstruct the dynamics (interpersonal and intertextual) as they evolved in the development of the discourse.

These data provide the link between the larger and more general theoretical claims I made in Chapter One, and the specific practices and workings of this classroom. In order to fully explore the ways in which knowledge and relationships (including power relationships) are constructed in collaborative groupwork, I will lay out one more theoretical construct, that of positioning, to provide a framework within which we can come to understand some of the dynamics and discursive constructions of this particular group. This framework provides the bridge between general claims of community, discourse, and power dynamics, and the moment-to-moment playing out of the complex interrelationships and interweavings among them that the data represent. I will then provide an overview of my methods of analysis, in order that the reader may be fully aware of how I formulated, and validated, my interpretations. It is in the moment-to-moment discursive actions and interactions that discourses and

power relations are constructed, and the framework and analytic approaches below enable us to examine these in detail.

Positioning

Social interaction involves complex and dynamic negotiations of identities, activities, viewpoints, and even "realities." Each of us brings to any social interaction, based on our prior experiences, a capacity to take on an array of different socially situated identities, that is, the capacity to behave as different "kinds of people" (Hacking 1986) using different "ways with words" for different kinds of contexts and interactions. At the same time, interaction itself, both in terms of the ways in which language is used and the ways in which participation is structured, "invites" or "summons" (Fairclough 1992) each participant to take on particular sorts of identities, to act and talk as if he or she were a certain socially situated "kind of person." Furthermore, the identities participants are "invited" or "summoned" to take up in social interactions are often not static (fixed in a rigid way), but rather are ongoingly negotiated and renegotiated across the sequential unfolding of the interaction (Schegloff, Ochs & Thompson 1996).

People do not enter social interaction as "blank slates" on which the workings of language and participation can "write" in any way whatsoever. Their prior experiences and their diverse (and sometimes conflicting) sociocultural memberships deeply influence the nature of the social interaction (Bernstein

1990). So, also, do the institutions within which the interaction takes place. Yet, at the same time, the socially situated identities people take on are always enacted as part of social interactions and are rendered meaningful and recognizable only as "products" of such interactions (Edwards & Potter 1992; Carbaugh 1994). Thus, we must add, as well, that social interactions produce and reproduce the socially situated identities that we humans acquire, assume, and transform (identities which, over time, can become more or less "fossilized" into workings of institutions).

The socially situated identities participants in social interaction take on, then, at any given time, are a complex integration of their diverse sociocultural experiences, the sociocultural experiences of others in the interaction, the structure and flow of language, participation, and negotiation in the interaction, and the larger cultural and institutional settings within which the interaction takes place (Hanks 1996). We humans are simultaneously active (agents) and passive (recipients) in interaction as we position and are positioned in a diverse "social space" of changing identities which we enact in word, deed, and value.

Of course, thanks to the workings of power, in any given interaction certain participants may get "positioned" more than they "position," and certain identities may be more or less available to some participants than to others. We can, in fact, be "summoned" to occupy a "position" in a "social space" or to assume a socially situated identity (I will not distinguish between these two for the moment) that we cannot or will not accept. Then, too, we can bring to an

interaction an identity that is at cross-purposes with the identity that the current dynamics in the interaction "invites" us to assume--and there can be various sorts of "prices" which we "pay" according to which identity we take on.

The complexity here is such that theorists have used a number of sometimes overlapping terms to capture some of it: terms such as "role," "position," "identity," and "subjectivity." For one thing, we can usefully distinguish two senses of "identity." One involves the sort of situated "shape-shifting" that we all accomplish, with others, in and through social interaction in order that our language and behavior come to fit the context (some people may prefer a term like "subjectivity" and talk of "multiple subjectivities" or "subject positions" here). Another sense of "identity" involves whatever it is that allows us to recognize in ourselves and others a certain (however tension-filled) "unity" or integration across time and contexts (after all, most of us are not officially suffering from multiple personality disorder). Of course, this latter sense of "identity" influences the multiple socially situated identities we enact in multiple contexts, and both are, in part, at least, accomplishments (suitably narrativized) stemming from the multiple socially situated identities we have enacted and reenacted through time.

The term "position" (and the associated term "positioning") has tended to be used when the theorist wants to stress the ways in which language (and other forms of communication) in interaction limits the responses that can be deemed "appropriate" and thus creates various "constrained" positions from which the

responder can speak (though never completely determining them). The term "role" has tended to be used when the theorist wants to stress the fact that in interaction, at any given time, different participants are often serving different participatory, communicative, and affective functions in the interaction, functions that involve engaging in certain characteristic activities and modes of interaction, filling, we might say, a certain socially recognizable "space."

"Role" is sometimes criticized as implying too much "fixity," e.g. Davies & Harre (1990) say that "[positioning] helps focus attention on dynamic aspects of encounters in contrast to the way in which the use of 'role' serves to highlight static, formal and ritualistic aspects." Nonetheless, there is an important continua to capture here ranging from interactions in which people are assigned relatively fixed functions (e.g. in a courtroom) to cases where functions are fluidly changed and interchanged rather quickly (as often happens in "everyday" conversation). Of course, even in the case of fairly fixed roles (e.g. prosecuting attorney in court), how one enacts that role changes across the interaction and is, in detail, "reciprocally designed" in interaction with others in the interaction--and this reciprocal design is part of what the notion of "positioning" is meant to capture.

So, "roles" can help us think about different functions, and "positions" can help us think about the moment-by-moment ways in which participants are "authorized" to speak or listen so as carry out or change their functions (and/or roles). Positioning and roles weave a tapestry out of which culturally

recognizable, but diverse identities become recognizable in terms of the (multiple) "kinds of people" we become in interaction and which we bring as resources to further interactions. Thus, being a "prosecuting attorney" is a socially situated identity (and also a large-scale role or set of functions) one can take on (connected, of course, to the even the more widely shared identity of being a lawyer) if one has been "sanctioned" to do so (which is, in part, a matter of convincing others that one has the "right" knowledge, skills, and background). It also involves taking on, in different contexts, certain functions publicly/socially associated with the role, e.g., cross-examining witnesses, taking depositions, plea bargaining, etc.

Roles are ultimately constituted out of the interactional details of language and behavior in actual contexts. They are, that is to say, an outcome of multiple acts of "real time" interactional positioning and being positioned by judges, witnesses, felons, competing attorneys, the press, and public. Of course, the sorts of interactions that I am studying in this thesis are, for the most part, more fluid than this example would imply.

I will not, then, eschew any of the terms "positioning," "role," or "identity," since I believe they each help us focus on a different aspect or "level" of what are very complex processes. However, I want to be careful to see social positions (where and how people have been "authorized" to speak or listen in terms of a specific role or identity), roles (a specific sort of socially- and institutionally-defined space a participant inhabits which may include specific

characteristics, ways of being, and sets of functions), and socially situated identities (the culturally recognizable composites which, however partially and temporarily, participants take on to assume and integrate positions and roles) as all simultaneously the outcomes of interaction (a "bottom up" view) and products of larger cultural and institutional settings (a "top down" view). It is important, as far as I am concerned, not to privilege either side of this construction. To privilege interaction alone as the site of social positions, roles, and identities is to miss the larger historical, cultural, and institutional workings of power, in which all interactions and communicative events are embedded. It is also to miss the ways in which human interaction over time partially ritualizes into larger social entities. On the other hand, to privilege institutions alone is to miss the agentiveness of humans and the transformations of their social and cultural memberships.

Whatever terms we use, it is important to see that in interaction people can try to claim roles and identities that they may not be granted access to by others in the interaction. Their "bid" for these is, of course, an attempt to position others to accept it. Their failure to get them, if they do, is a result of the positioning others in the interaction have done to and with them. Getting and, then, holding onto (through "positioning work") a given role, and the socially situated identity it implies, is always a negotiated accomplishment where the workings of power are at play. Out of such power-laden negotiations people's socially situated identities are constructed as (however transitory) composites of

the roles they bid for, lose, and gain, and the multiple ways in which they position others, and are positioned by them, through verbal and non-verbal communication. In this sense, a socially situated identity is a (however short or long) strand in the warp and weave of role and positioning work, a strand that becomes recognizable only when placed within the larger cultural (and discourse) knowledge of the participants in the interaction.

Units of Analysis

Above I have argued that in social interaction, people position others, and get positioned by them, through intricate processes of negotiation (though always in the context of larger historical and institutional forces). Through this positioning work, people "bid" to (or are "summoned" to) inhabit (in word and deed), however momentarily, a particular role (e.g. "mediator" or "devil's advocate") or socially situated identity (e.g., experienced teacher or academic theorist).

Positioning works simultaneously at several different levels, each level calling on different social functions of language and recruiting different aspects of the structure of language. Thus, any analysis of the sort I carry out in this thesis must pay attention to language in a number of different ways (my approach below melds work by Lemke 1995, based on Halliday 1994, with work by Chafe 1994 and Gee 1993, 1996). For my analysis, I basically interrogated my data in terms of three different levels of meaning (broadly construed): what I

will call the level of themes, the level of interpersonal exchange, and, finally, the level of messages.

These levels relate to grammatical structures in a fairly complex way. It is easier to start with the last first. Almost all utterances carry some information, though utterances function in more ways than just giving information (e.g. to create or maintain social bonds, and to signal affect and attitude). Further, utterances do not just convey information, they always simultaneously take a particular perspective on that information, signaling through word order, intonation, and various grammatical devices: what is the topic, what is a "comment" on that topic; what is new information, what is old or taken for granted information; what is backgrounded information, what is foregrounded; and signaling various attitudes to or stances on the information.

The smallest unit at which this sort of information packaging occurs in utterances is the "tone unit" (a phrase, clause, or sentence said with uniform intonation contours and one major fall or rise in pitch on the foregrounded information in the unit, see Chafe 1994; Gee 1993). Tone units combine to create larger "information units," that is, clauses or sentences organized around the same topic (what Hymes 1996 calls "verses" and "stanzas"). How such information units are grammatically packaged and organized in regard to each other carries important information about the perspective communicators are taking on the information they are seeking to convey (and, of course, get others to respond to). It is important to note, however, that the usage of tone units to

analyze the speech of second language speakers can be problematic, because the intonation system is one of the most difficult linguistic systems for second language learners to master. On the other hand, tone units are heard, and included, by native speakers, in their attempt to interpet messages.

For example, if in answer to my question "What colleges accepted your daughter?" you respond, "She got into her first choice / Stanford" (tone units are separated by a "/" and I assume that the second tone unit is said on a lower pitch than the first), you are foregrounding the idea that she got her first choice and treating "Stanford" as an "afterthought." On the other hand, if you respond "She got into Stanford / her first choice" you are foregrounding Stanford (again, provided the second tone unit is said on a lower pitch). Changing the pitch levels between the two units in either case, changes the background-foreground structure of the information. If you respond, "Stanford accepted HER" (with the major stress on "her"), you are both making Stanford the "agent" and signaling something like surprise that she got accepted. Needless to say, there is a wealth of details in terms of which utterances can be "decoded" for such perspective-taking concerns.

This sort of background and foregrounding and shaping of information can take place over several clauses. To take an example from the data I will analyze below, consider:

> Well / my name is Carlos / and I taught for three weeks in NYC / I was a Spanish teacher / and I learned the hard way/ that you should not go into (the) classroom with a lot of passion / because passion only takes you

so far // You need those skills sometimes / to
recognize what's going on in a classroom //

Here Carlos uses "well" to attach his turn to the proceeding one (see discussion of the exchange level below) and then gives his name as the foregrounded part of the next tone unit (as is normal in introductions). He then produces three units all starting with "I" and all involving teaching and learning. This topically connected block of units ends with two tone units about passion. So from his teaching and learning identity, connected to his name, we "flow" to (a caution about) "passion". After "because passion only takes you so far," Carlos has a long fall in pitch and a significant pause. He also switches grammatical subject from "I" to "you" and juxtaposes "skills" (in a foregrounded position in its tone unit) to "passion" (a recognizable thematic dichotomy). I mark this multiple transition with a double slash ("//") in the transcript above.

Thus, we can say that Carlos juxtaposes two larger message or information units (with their concomitant perspective taking and shaping), one to do with teaching-learning-passion and the other to do with skills. It is important for my later discussion of themes and patterns to see that a close look at the details of "wording" at the level of tone units and larger topical configurations gives rise to hypotheses about what themes and images are salient to participants.

It is not my purpose in this thesis to engage in close grammatical analysis. My point here is that close inspection of how information is shaped

(packaged) is an important part of any analysis that seeks to get at the larger themes and perspectives that people communicate across stretches of social interaction.

The level of interpersonal exchange involves the ways in which people in social interaction take turns. Turn taking is a major focus of work on conversational analysis (Goodwin & Heritage 1990), though it has been salient, as well, in a British tradition of discourse analysis (Coulthard 1988). In social interaction, people "bid" to get the floor. When they do, they must do work to keep it, then work to get someone else to take a turn that "appropriately" responds to their turn. Turns can be made up of one or more tone units, and even of one or more larger topically configured units, as in the case of Carlos, above. And, further, multiple participants, through several turns, create larger topically configured units (made up of contributions by different people). Finally, it takes conversational work to change topics--one can bid to get a topic started and have the bid fail.

How topics are introduced and taken up (or not), whose bids to start them are accepted or not, how people configure topic units (stretches of talk that are topically related) in interaction with each other, are all consequential for how fully, and with what "status" and from what position, each participant participates in the ongoing social practice of which the social interaction is a part. Of course, such "participant structure" changes across time. My analysis will look at turns at talk, both in terms of how many a participant "takes" or "gets" and in terms of

different types of turns, that is, different functions they serve in the ongoing interaction. It should be pointed out that how a participant shapes the information within his or her turns and across various turns at talk (our "message level") is an important part of how people attempt to strategically manipulate turn taking and the ongoing flow of topics and participation.

The final level on which the thesis interrogates its data is the level of thematic structure or patterning. Across an interaction, or across multiple interactions people sometimes word things in similar ways and shape information from similar perspectives. They create a pattern of similar or related (or even contrasting) themes, images, issues, or interests in terms of which we can begin to attribute certain usually tacit (taken for granted) theories or "storylines" to them. Of course, these theories or "storylines" need not be complete or consistent across larger stretches of interaction. They can be (and often will be) dynamically transformed as part and parcel of the interaction. Nonetheless, the fact that people do have certain relatively stable identities and sociocultural memberships, as well as sometimes fairly defined roles (like my role as researcher and facilitator), and the fact that they operate within historically shaped institutions, does ensure that some patterns of themes and interests are fairly robust and widely recurrent.

When I say that the patterning of themes--as these are expressed by characteristic wordings, topic configurations, perspective takings, and patterns of exchange--can lead us to begin to attribute "theories" or "storylines" to

people, I do not mean that we are claiming that we can see "inside" people's heads. These theories or storylines- sometimes called "cultural models" (D'Andrade & Strauss 1992)- are, rather, the sorts of assumptions communicators (and analysts, too) make to make sense of talk. Given that so and so has recurrently said and done so and so, in such and such ways, what sorts of "models" ("theories," "storylines," patterns of themes or interests) can we attribute to him or her that make larger sense of what is being said and how it is being said, especially within the terms of what we know about, and share as "common ground" (Clark 1996) with each other?

People who belong to the same groups (interactionally, socially, or culturally) build up "common ground" in terms of which they can mutually negotiate, share, and contend over various "cultural models." These "thematic complexes" (Lemke 1995) are distributed across people and often instantiated in the texts they read and write, as well as the social practices in which they engage. People supplement each other's "theories" and transform them in interaction. Nonetheless, different social and cultural groups of people can have allegiance to quite different “thematic complexes,” or “cultural models," connected in consequential ways to their larger "political" interests.

An example of a thematic complex that is often represented in similar and related wordings, as well as topic configurations and the ways in which information is foregrounded and backgrounded, among the group of academic educators connected to Schools of Education is the "theory-practice distinction,"

connected, in turn, to status differences between teaching and "research" in the university and teaching in the schools. Everyone who is "native" to salient discourses in Education will recognize patterns of wordings, topics, images and themes here (through which, ironically, perhaps, they can disagree with each other while still sharing the same themes, images, and fundamental assumptions). They will recognize how the "story" tends to go (what sounds typical) in regard to "theory" and "practice" and tensions between them.

Much of what I do in my analyses below is to look within message units (large and small) and turns at talk (and patterns of such turns) for patterns of themes, connected to different interests and identities, and recognizable to people who are central participants in the communities of practice that compose our educational institutions. In fact, coming to recognize such themes and patterns (and the controversies among them-- in fact, controversies which they frame) is part of how a peripheral participant in these communities of practice comes to be more central to the practice.

Analysis

In presenting my analysis of the data, essentially a scrutiny of the details of message, exchange, and thematic structure, it is clear that this sort of ethnographic study presumes interpretive methodology. Ultimately, it is up to the reader to assess the validity of my claims. This "...can only be determined through the ability of (these) statements to win the agreement of a cultural

community." (Carspecken 1996:56; see also Mischler 1990). The cultural community I am appealing to is that group, within the larger academic community, which is knowledgeable about, and immersed in, these sorts of research practices. What follows are the procedures I engaged in to set up an interpretive framework, and to check and validate the meanings I ascribed to participants and events.

I began by listening, again, to all the taped sessions, and reading all the field notes and transcriptions. I identified, as much as possible, patterns and routines, as well as speech events and behaviors that deviated from the norms and patterns that came to be set by the group. To these, of course, I ascribed possible meanings and interpretations, based on the sorts of linguistic devices I have discussed above and the whatever "insider" or "native" knowledge I possessed both as a participant in the interactions and in the larger institution that in which they were embedded. I then coded the data, using categories that I felt would inform my interpretations. Since I was particularly looking at (among other things) the individuals' participation within the group, I used categories such as: number of turns participants took; length of turns; and function of (certain) speech acts. The most important that emerged were organization (i.e. setting agendas, time keeping, focusing in on topics) and proposals (an individual making a concrete interpretive or theoretical move). I also noted what positions participants spoke from, from which identities they made knowledge claims (i.e. teacher, language learner, community member, graduate student,

etc.). Equally important were responses to individual contributions. Which were taken up (incorporated into group discussion)? Which ignored?

The second major focus of my work, in analyzing the group discourse, was to explore which of all of the identifiable resources that were available (language, texts, experiences) were taken up, and how this happened. I wanted to see which sources were drawn on, and became incorporated into the group discourse. So I coded for this, as well. I looked for uses of new vocabulary, concepts and interpretations. I looked at (as I said above) who made these contributions, but specifically here at what they drew on (that I could identify) to make them. I listened to the tapes of the large group meetings, and re-read all the articles that class members had been given, as well as all the handouts from Jerri. And I tracked, within the transcripts, where concepts and terminology had first surfaced, and how usage developed (or not).

From locating roles and positions from which group members spoke, social interactions, and sources and language drawn on, I developed my theories of how the discourse develops. For the sake of validity, I used a number of checking devices. Obviously, multiple instantiations validated certain claims; for certain behaviors and interactions, consistency and repetition were needed to claim a pattern. I also used field notes in multiple ways. It was helpful when my reactions and insights at the time of an event were consistent with evidence in the data. I also looked for instances where these were inconsistent, to prevent making false claims. Additionally, there were numerous

instances of conversations with participants where they substantiated my interpretations (i.e. group members commenting on other group members' behavior). And, in places, I comment on non-verbal behaviors which reinforced interpretations from audio tapes.

During the study, at least three group members read portions of my field notes, and commented, although Ruth was the most consistent. I also had multiple conversations and interviews with group members (individually) specifically about group dynamics, reactions to the process, learning, etc., although, again, I spoke with some group members more consistently than others. And two group members kept dialog journals with me (Ruth and Huei Ling), which provided, at times, substantiation of certain claims. In other words, I received multiple perspectives on certain portions of my work while the research was in progress, and feedback on interpretations I was making at that time.

Facilitators meetings provided help, as well. Not only did I discuss my group, and specifically what was happening, with other facilitators as it went along (although this was more group dynamics and the facilitation process than looking specifically at an educational discourse), but I was given insight into others' experiences, with which I could contrast and compare, thus validating my perspectives, and providing me with fresh ones.

Jerri was available to me, as well. Many times I reviewed my situation and work with her. She helped in providing alternate strategies to use with the group, as well as alternate ways of perceiving the interactions. And she had a

wealth of information, not just from her academic background in these and related issues, but from working with these sorts of course designs over time, and being able to represent multiple perspectives on them from past participants.

Some of these participants are (or were) also doctoral students, who have done ethnographic research in these classes on related topics, especially focusing on group dynamics and interactions. And these students are part of my academic community, and their work and feedback inform mine.

Last, but not least, in the analysis and writing of this study, I have used what Carspecken calls "peer de-briefing." That is to say, I have shown my work to others in my profession, whom I consider to be experts in this sort of research, and asked for other possible interpretations, and validation of mine.

These, then, are the primary tools and methods I have used. As I proceed, I will try to furnish the evidence I used in my interpretations to support my claims, in order that readers may assess the validity for themselves.

Limitations

There are, of course, numerous limitations to this study. As stated earlier, I assume a view of learning and teaching (outlined in the initial chapter), and do not question nor research its “effectiveness,” or “success.”

The context in which I carry out the study, the tools and texts which I use, and even my goals and purpose, are embedded in the Academic Discourse

community. I am therefore using the tools of one community to attempt to understand and explicate others.

The role of participant-observer, itself, creates tensions between being a group member, and therefore immersed in the practices, and being able to distance from the group enough to recognize and analyze behaviors and speech from a researcher's perspective. I assume a dual voice in this study, and hope I have separated them.

While I have, where possible, used the participants in the group as debriefers, I had less access to those who could have acted as cultural informants (i.e. the Chinese, Vietnamese and Puerto Rican members). While they did provide crucial feedback, I had more extensive comments and interactions on my work as it progressed from the "mainstream" members of the group.

And, while I have collected all the text and talk accessible within the confines of the meetings of this group, there are boundaries here, as well. I have made no effort to get at what's "inside the heads" of the participants. I do not ask what they believe, nor do I look at the processing they do as individuals. I have limited my work to analyzing only the speech and behaviors made public within this particular setting.

This study does not reflect on the applicability of the learning that happens in this setting to the participants' actual teaching, or, indeed, to any effects outside of this graduate classroom. We do not know how the new views,

voices, and perspectives class members come to take on over the semester translate to their practices as teachers. We cannot, as well, investigate whether these sorts of methodologies contribute to any change in participants' perspectives or practice beyond the time frame of this semester.

While these are all interesting questions, they are beyond the scope of this study. This is intended only to investigate the public dynamics and interactions over one semester in this particular environment. And, since it is a case study, we are looking at one particular instantiation of one specific class at one specific place and time. Therefore, the results are not generalizable without being substantiated by further research across a diverse array of settings.

CHAPTER 3

INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

In order to provide a conceptual framework for the analysis, there are three interrelated issues we must first examine. The first is that we must define and describe, as far as possible, the sort of workspace and environment that was constructed at the beginning of the semester. This is, of course, more fluid and dynamic than "define" might imply, as it is the composite of the structure and design, interactions among all participants, and the institutional framework. This created a complex and chaotic space, one which the professor termed "a noisy debate." The second issue, inseparable from this first, addresses the ways in which students mapped notions from traditional pedagogies onto this environment, specifically the notions of status and hierarchy. The third, building upon and integrating with these first two, focuses on the roles and identities participants came to take up within this environment, and the ways in which they came to find a voice from which to speak.

I would like to represent this particular environment as a complex "heteroglossic" space of debate and negotiation. These negotiations and debates occurred not only among the students, but among students and professor, students and texts, and students and institutions. Indeed some of the "noisiest" debates may well have been in students' own minds; debates between competing stories about and perspectives on pedagogy, learning, structures,

and hierarchies. These debates sprang from the confrontation between beliefs and perspectives based on prior learning and experiences, and the new and ongoing experiences in this particular course.

Before examining the particular elements at play here, I'd like to look at what's at stake when people from diverse backgrounds enter into new paradigms such as this. People's behaviors stem from two sometimes conflicting sources. In any domain, each of us has allegiance to two sorts of theories: an espoused theory (that which we articulate); and a theory-in-practice (which can be inferred from our behavior, but about which we do not always have much meta-awareness). In some cases, the theory that a person espouses is consistent with (or is) the theory that guides his or her actual practice, in which case there is little or no conflict. But at other times, often when people are in the process of transforming their perspectives, the two theories conflict, giving rise to an inconsistency between what a person claims (even to oneself) to believe, and what it is one actually does.

In the change process, espoused theories (overt allegiances) can change much more rapidly than theories in practice. Theories in practice are the result of our immersion in repeated practice and socialization. They are often deeply connected to our sense of habit and comfort. Espoused theories result from a more overt and rational consideration of values, competing evidence, and desire for change. Chris Argyris (1993) gives the example of a group of business consultants who want to communicate more directly and forcefully with each

other in order to accomplish their business goals. This overt goal, which is connected to an espoused theory they have formed (or been "sold") about how contemporary business ought to operate, conflicts with a lifetime of abiding (Anglo) middle class norms of avoiding face-to-face confrontation and mitigating confrontative messages. Argyris argues that it may take years for theories in practice to change even after a new espoused theory has been accepted (and, of course, both theories may go through many transitional stages). This also argues that theories in practice change fully not only after much practice, but only when the learner comes to see such change as consequential for his or her functioning. In the case of this classroom, then, students may articulate belief in (and even authentically value) new (constructivist) pedagogies, before being ready or able to fully participate in and enact them in practice.

Even as theories in practice begin to align more and more with espoused theories, it may be the case that under conditions of stress, chaos, or "noisy debate" people are liable to fall back on older theories in practice, without necessarily changing their more overt allegiances to their newly forming espoused theories. Equally importantly, the institutions within which new practices are embedded may actually operate in such a way that they make apprentices distrust the espoused theories they are being encouraged to adopt or to misperceive the practices they see and are part of. In our case, it is certainly the case that the students in the course are members of a school of education and university that does not operate consistently in terms of the

ideology of the constructivism to which they are exposed in this class, not to mention their memberships in other institutions (e.g. the schools in which they teach and/or have been taught).

The roots of the chaos in this course, or the sites of conflicting theories and beliefs, are multiple, and all are rooted in the complex social processes we have been discussing. Some students are new to this constructivist paradigm. Others, although they have been exposed to similar class designs of Jerri's in previous coursework, still have (or at times fall back on) theories in practice with allegiance to traditional paradigms of schooling. Some of these students were in an earlier, more practice-based class (Methods of Second Language Teaching), and mistook the more theoretical academic content of this course to signal allegiance to more traditional paradigms and practices. For these students, one might even posit that they felt betrayed by Jerri. From Jerri's perspective:

> I think some of them could have been asking me to give an explanation-- how could I do so many traditional things (lots of reading with academic language) when I claimed to be doing something different-- maybe for some I was selling out (after having a course that was just as complex but didn't focus on academic language). Maybe they were resisting the new language in the articles, not the assumptions behind them (and the opposite). As far as the assumptions go, most students in the class had heard them before-- and many agreed with some of them (e.g. they may have come to see that doing Methods works for this kind of organization, but were having difficulty seeing that "abstract" knowledge could be taught using the same approach)... (pc)

Some students voiced conflict over whether university courses have applicability to "real-world" teaching practices (this theory vs. practice is a long standing debate in schools of education). And some may have wished for the traditional teacher-led, transmission style pedagogy, since it would have made "playing school" easier for them. For all these reasons, and more, many (perhaps most) of the students in the class displayed resistance to "going along" with the design and structure.

For the first three or four weeks, in fact, there was evidence of discomfort and resistance on the part of the students. This was displayed in conversations I had with individual students, feelings and reactions discussed at length in the small group in which I participated, and was one of the primary focuses of the first facilitators' meeting, where all facilitators reported these reactions, and similar discussions, in their groups. In fact, the whole class discussed these issues in one class session, when Jerri was not present, and resolved that a small group of students would approach Jerri in her office and ask her to change the structure, and reduce the workload.

This particular course represented a distinctive style of constructivist education, one which I will call "post progressive." Students were expected to be proactive in their learning, immersed in their individual and collaborative problem solving, and setting many of their own goals, all of which is typical of "progressive" forms of education. The difference, however, is that in this course the professor did not eschew explicit information and guidance, and retained

some of the traditional sources of teacher authority (e.g. grading). She was explicit about the design of the learning community she wished to establish and she was explicit about the content goals of the course. Furthermore, the course had a heavy reading load and rigorous theoretical academic content. Thus, typical of post progressive pedagogies, immersion and "learner empowerment" were balanced with overt focusing, guidance, and rigorous academic content.

As one might imagine, however, this complexity contributes to the "noise," especially early in the semester. Not only is the diversity and newness of activities and roles confusing, but without yet having much of the theoretical language and concepts covered in the readings, students are being asked to take on activities and roles that are embedded in this different educational paradigm. So they struggle to make sense of concepts, language, expectations, and relationships.

Some students enter this class embedded in traditional notions of "schooling" and want (and expect) clearly defined tasks, definitions, understandings of (primarily the professor's) expectations. They are familiar with certain language and assumptions about schooling (both K-12 and University), and, while they can accept that this Professor does things "differently," they at least want the "rules" clearly spelled out. What are they expected to do? What are grades based on? What performance is required of them? Other students enter with varying degrees of allegiance to the professor's paradigm, as well as

varying interpretations of that paradigm, though they, too, have a lifetime of experience with traditional notions of schooling.

What the students get is language that is embedded in, and reflective of, a paradigm quite different from the traditional "grammar of schooling" (Tyack & Cuban 1995). Consider the following, taken from the course syllabus (Appendix A), the first document that they receive on the first day of class. It begins:

> All teachers have assumptions about learning and teaching that guide their actions and decisions. These assumptions are based on prior experiences, universal imperatives, and ongoing experiences in particular social contexts. Mostly, they (sic) assumptions are implicit and often contradictory. Moreover, they are dynamic and change as we gain new information from the social environment.

For those students familiar with current social theory, this laying out of underlying theory, grounded in poststructural ideology, is an apt starting place. For students looking for structure and rules, they certainly won't find it here. So they continue to the next section of the syllabus, which looks a bit more promising, as it's entitled "Activities." The five "activities" given are as follows:

> 1) assist me in examining my own assumptions and practices.
> 2) assist cooperating teachers to articulate, examine, critique and revise assumptions and practices.
> 3) read about selected key concepts that have been published in journals about the nature of learning and teaching.
> 4) participate in activities designed to increase understanding of these key concepts.

> 5) examine and critique your own assumptions and practices as you participate in tutoring, teaching, facilitating, or language learning.

While the style of introduction is consistent with the perspectives of language, learning, and teaching that this course embodies, it certainly does not fulfill traditional expectations of students, who have learned to "play school" quite differently. Although the syllabus does continue with an explanation of the various phases of the class (see Appendix A), there is a tremendous amount of information set out in an ideology and terminology that many find somewhat overwhelming and others (e.g. those who have had other classes with Jerri) may interpret in differing ways depending on how far they have gone in adapting their old theories in practice (largely based on traditional models of schooling) to their newly emerging espoused constructivist theories.

My contention is that the single most challenging issue is that of coming to define roles and hierarchies in new ways. Traditional models of schooling present new concepts and information, but do so within a stable structure. Students understand, from previous encounters with academic discourse, the structure of authority, and academic and disciplinary notions of experts and expertise. Within the classroom, the teacher and the texts hold the information that students are expected to "learn" (most often, be able to parrot), and students are to do as directed. They understand wider hierarchies, also, e.g. that university professors "know more" than teachers (i.e. are more expert), that researchers uncover the "real truths." And, within the community, they know that

principals have more authority than teachers, superintendents more than principals, but these positions are not deferred to for academic expertise. Even those students beginning to adapt to a constructivist view of learning have to come to understand the complex role of the professor in terms of a wider university system in which traditional hierarchy still very much exists, as well as in terms of a post-progressive pedagogy in which the teacher still has status as a "more expert" guide with her own allegiances to theory, academic knowledge, and training graduate students, though these are mitigated by her allegiances to self-conscious reflection on the workings of knowledge, status, and authority. This, of course, parallels the position which they will come to hold should they come to appropriate constructivist beliefs and pedagogies.

So students come to this course either with a mental model of how roles are positioned within hierarchical systems based on traditional notions of schooling, or trying to gain perspectives on these roles in a new and complex teaching-learning space, with varying temptations to fall back on traditional models or to distrust that the teacher is really instantiating a new non-traditional model. Students struggle to develop a new social order, a new hierarchy, in this environment. They attempt to map traditional notions of "expert" and "authority" onto this new terrain. While they can see that the old structures, roles, and ways of acting and interacting are not appropriate here, they search for new ones, to try to find a position from which they can operate. They search for a new hierarchy, one that still embodies "expertise" and "authority," but one that

will work within this new paradigm. Many are willing to re-negotiate positions and roles, as long as they have a mental model of a hierarchical framework within which they can interact, and come to locate these roles and positions. In the following chapter we will explore the implications of this. We will look at how "expertise" and "authority" are negotiated and come to be represented, how this is related to the roles and positioning of members of the small group, and ultimately, how it shapes the learning that occurs.

The third issue is inextricably bound up with this, but focuses more on the individual social identities members publicly took on within the small group. This small group component was the most complex aspect of the class. All class members were assigned to a group in the second week of the term. The groups were meant to be heterogeneous, to represent diverse academic levels (beginning and seasoned graduate students), ethnicities, genders, language backgrounds, and teaching experiences. The goal, as explicated earlier, was to provide a collaborative, task-based, experiential component to the class, which would enable the students to experience and reflect on the sorts of learning theory the course espoused. The initial information, again taken from the syllabus, was:

> The task of the group will be to analyze how learning is organized in a local ESL classroom and the underlying assumptions that govern this organization. Insights gained from the readings and full-class activities should provide ways of handling this. The process will be as follows: Data will be collected from the classroom by one of the members

> and brought to the team meeting. The data will be analyzed as a group, using insights from the reading and lectures where ever possible....

The task for the group was to collaboratively produce four separate analyses of a local ESL classroom, one on each of the following topics: Syllabus; Classroom Interaction; Learner Performance; and Task.

Each group member was required to participate in one of five activities outside of class time. The choices were: tutoring an ESL learner; learning a foreign language; teaching a class; assisting in a classroom; or researching the group process. Different group members took on different activities, and were meant to represent these teaching and learning experiences as part of their contribution to the group. Additionally, one group member (in this case, me) was assigned to be the "facilitator," and one (Carlos) to be the "cooperating teacher," as described earlier. The facilitator was to focus on group process, providing feedback and support to the group as warranted. The cooperating teacher was to provide the group with data from his/her actual teaching practice, although, in this case, as Carlos did not have one, he acted as liaison to a teacher (and classroom) in a nearby city.

These assigned roles were meant to ensure that the group worked together smoothly, and to enable each member to have something to offer, some area of experience they could represent that would be useful to the group in accomplishing its task.

My third area of inquiry is centered on this notion of roles, and their relation to the identities that members took on within the group. It seems that people took on definite identities within the group, and publicly claimed knowledge and expertise based on these identities, but these often bore little relation to the pre-assigned roles. The issue I will explore in Chapter 5 is this: How the roles and identities members took on (and were sanctioned to take) determined their participation and contributions (both the content and language), and how these contributions were (and weren't) appropriated into the group discourse.

In doing this, we will explore the meanings of "expert" and "authority," in an attempt to identify precisely what expectations and understandings students brought with them, how their understandings and negotiations of these influenced the dynamics and discourse of the group, and how these terms might be better defined to determine their roles in this sort of exploratory, collaborative environment.

CHAPTER 4

REPRESENTATIONS OF AUTHORITY AND EXPERTISE:

THE COLLISION OF DIVERSE EXPECTATIONS

In the preceding chapter I have represented some of the complexities and tensions inherent in post progressive pedagogies. We've examined, as well, those inherent in entering new paradigms, and coming to shift long-held theories and beliefs. In this chapter, I would like to explore the initial exposure to (and immersion in) this class from the perspective of the students, and to identify where, in this particular environment, some of those tensions were located.

In post progressive pedagogies, learners are immersed in experiential activities, and collaboratively negotiate the meanings. But there is explicit instruction as well, with the instructor assuming authority and expertise. In this course, Jerri set out her beliefs, assigned groups and roles, and set tasks that required that theory be applied to practice. The academic content was represented in readings, tutorials, and the portion of class where everyone met together. Here, then, is where Jerri's "expertise" came in; by carefully organizing the structure of the class, setting the tasks, selecting the readings, and choosing the content and method for the whole class meetings, she was assured that her ideas and values would be well represented in traditional ways (i.e. reading and discussion), and modelled as well.

There are many ways, however, in which this differed from a traditional format. While the ideas and beliefs that Jerri privileged were well represented throughout the environment, they were much less direct and explicit than in traditional classrooms. While students indeed received a syllabus the first day of class, as well as an explanation of the course, the specifics of the activities and tasks were expressed through theoretical concepts and language they had not yet come to understand (see discussion in preceding chapter).

The syllabus included a list of topics, sequentially, for the class meetings. These included: Whole Language as a Professional Theory and Its Place in the TESOL Community; Negotiating Meaning and Participating in Discourse Communities; and Situated Cognition and Apprenticeships. Jerri, taking up a traditional role as professor, has put forth and privileged the particular views of language and learning that would constitute the course. And it's not unusual for students to be unfamiliar with topics and content before taking the course. But, nontraditionally, Jerri employed multiple modes of instruction (including, but not limited to, lecturing). Students were at times divided into pairs or groups to experience and/or negotiate from their experiences, then the whole class would come together to summarize, with Jerri taking a very active facilitating role in that discussion, to be sure that key points were included, and misconceptions negotiated (rather than accepted). For example, the way the third topic was presented (Comprehensible Input, I & 1, Scaffolding, and the Monitor) was to break the class into groups. Each group had someone (a class member)

present a lesson in a foreign language (one that group members didn't know). The small groups then discussed the lesson; what was effective, what wasn't, what they understood, what they didn't, etc. The whole class then came together and discussed the implications for language learning and teaching.

This sort of approach places the instructor (Jerri) in a very different position than she would have in a traditional classroom. The class is "student-centered," because students make use of their own experiences to relate to, and come to understand, the topic under discussion. The Professor steps back from the position of "giver-of-knowledge," with all attention focused on her words. But her expertise is well represented, both in the structure of the class itself, and her participation in (and monitoring of) the discussion. On the other hand, students have expertise, too. Many of them have experiences and knowledge the Professor doesn't have. In this case, many have learned second (and third, and fourth) languages in diverse settings, with diverse methods, and their representation of this is an important learning tool for their classmates. One of the primary goals that the professor espouses is that students come to see one another as resources. And the small groups allow for more voices to be shared, and heard, both because of the lesser number of students (allowing more opportunity and time for each to speak), and the absence of Jerri, which removes both the learner's anxiety about how "the expert" will judge her performance, and the students looking to her (Jerri) to provide "the answers."

By removing herself physically from the small groups, and arranging the classroom space with chairs in a circle in the full class meeting, Jerri manages to physically and verbally convey the message that she is not the only source of expertise and knowledge in the room. And it is, ironically, her authority that allows her to dictate to the students that they must participate and negotiate amongst themselves.

But some students bring (or fall back on) the traditional notion that the knowledge they need resides in the Professor, and that she must "tell" it to them, so that they may "learn" it. So, initially at any rate, while they enjoy discussions with classmates, and see that experiential learning allows them to make sense of new material, some feel "cheated out" of what they're paying for (a graduate education). This is not "learning" by the definition that they are used to. This sort of experience (possibly in part because it's more fun and engaging) holds lower status for them. Others, who may be closer to a theory in practice that recognizes that knowledge is distributed, may feel that their experiences and views are no match for the theoretical research that they are exposed to here. For all, they have been socialized into schooling practices where learning and classroom practices look very different from this, and where theoretical knowledge holds more status than experiential. And they are currently (physically) in an institution of higher education that represents "learning" and "knowledge" to them.

The readings were the primary representation of the theoretical research, and they functioned somewhat differently. There were assigned readings for each class, which students were to read beforehand. Because many of the readings were written in a style and language that would be difficult for the students to comprehend, Jerry held a weekly tutorial. One student from each small group was to read the assigned articles for a given week *the week before* their classmates. They were to write down questions, comments, connections, etc. They then attended the forty-five minute tutorial with Jerri (along with the representatives of the other groups), and held an in-depth discussion of the article. They were responsible for summarizing this discussion and presenting it to their groupmates. Group members rotated this task. This not only ensured that someone in the group had a scaffolded representation of the content of the article, it signalled to the group that this person had expertise in this particular area. The full class, then, relied on all students understanding the content of the articles, and applied and built on that knowledge, but did not directly discuss the articles. So here, too, meaning was negotiated, and while Jerri delegated authority (via the tutorials) for a competent interpretation to be supplied to the class (thus the expertise was seeded in the environment), she also directly represented her own expertise.

There were, additionally, multiple articles handed out to the groups directly addressing the foci of the group tasks, but these, again, the groups divided amongst their members, with individuals representing the content of the

articles they read to the group. In this way all meanings and understandings were discussed and negotiated. There is strong evidence, in the group I studied, that the written documents (both the articles and the various handouts from Jerri, which came to represent Jerri) became the ultimate authority, and were deferred to particularly in times of confusion and/or disagreement. This we will examine in more detail later.

An additional issue worth addressing is that of sequencing. Most traditional classrooms sequence topics and events such that they begin simply, then build on each other. Instructors isolate and sequence components, much like introducing grammatical structures independently (and sequentially) while teaching a language, then asking the student to use them, but only in controlled ways after they've been introduced. In this course, students are immersed in information, experience, and practice simultaneously. They are asked to read, contribute, and negotiate complex concepts from the beginning, while analyzing aspects of a classroom practice. Everything interrelates, and students (theoretically) are able to make connections back and forth. If something doesn't quite connect the first time around, there's plenty of opportunity later. Concepts and knowledge are continually recast and reapplied, enabling diverse learners to utilize their background experience and knowledge in coming to understand (and to scaffold peers), as well as individual learning styles.

Again, this collision between the way in which students have traditionally engaged in course content, and this experience, initially feels chaotic. They are living the theory while learning it.

The claim I am making, then, is that while "authority" and "expertise" were indeed represented within this environment (in fact, carefully structured to be part of it), some students, who came with traditional representations in mind, did not recognize them. Others, who had had previous experiences with Jerri's courses, fell back on their traditional theories in practice (at least in part in resistance to this new theoretical language and content).

Now I'll turn to the beginning, and take a more detailed look at how the structure and content was initially represented, and how the students reacted, so that we begin to see the evidence for these claims.

The First Class

The first class, traditionally enough, consisted of handing out a syllabus and explicating the course. Participants introduced themselves, students read the syllabus, Jerri spoke. She explained that students would be working for part of each class in a small group for the duration of the semester, and they would be assigned to their group the following week. For the moment, they were to fill out a card with information about themselves, including language learning experience, and teaching experience. Jerri used this information to construct heterogeneous groups.

In fact, in the initial presentation, much of the syllabus/design was familiar to most students, conforming to traditional expectations. Of the four components, the full class meeting (with assigned readings) fell within a more-or-less traditional structure (although, as noted, the topics and language were unfamiliar), as did the tutorials (although the organization was a bit complex, and required some getting used to). The outside activities basically were a field work component, required in many education courses, and a final paper, also a traditional requirement. The component that required the largest shift from traditional practice and experiences was the ongoing collaboration of the small groups.

The syllabus contains a two page section entitled "Small Group Meetings" (see Appendix A). It begins with a brief paragraph addressing the actual activity the group is to engage in, but moves onto process (the ways in which they were to engage) even before the end of the paragraph:

> The task of the group will be to analyze how learning is organized in a local ESL classroom and the underlying assumptions that govern this organization. Insights gained from the readings and full-class activities should provide ways of handling this. The process will be as follows: Data will be collected from the classroom by one of the members and brought to the team meeting. The data will be analyzed as a group, using insights from the readings and lectures where ever possible. Each member will be responsible for writing a draft of one of the analyses. The draft will be revised carefully by the group. After the group's revision of the first draft, it should be turned in for feedback from the professor. The team will submit a portfolio with their finished analyses at the end of the course. In addition to completing the assigned tasks, it is expected that teams will help one another understand the

> assigned readings and class lectures and relate them to the group task and individual projects. In other words, you are each teachers for one another.

Note, in the second sentence, that Jerri directly states, "Insights gained from the readings and full-class activities should provide ways of handling this." Here, although she uses “should” (instead the more authoritative “will”) she gives direct recognition that the readings and full-class activities are to be referred to as authoritative. While the use of “should” indicates that this is a suggestion, or guideline, I contend that the identity of the author carries such authority that students will take it as absolute. Note, also, the switch from product to group (interpersonal) process, beginning with the sentence, "In addition to completing the assigned tasks, it is expected that teams will help one another understand the assigned readings and class lectures..." (Note the difference in language between “should” and “it is expected that,” signalling a difference in the weight assigned to these by Jerri). The text continues:

> The group will decide for themselves how to proceed. You will need to talk about your ideas thoroughly before you will know what to look at and how. Don't worry if it seems like you're not getting anywhere at first. It takes time for the group to start functioning in collaborative manner (sic) and the intellectual playing around you do in the beginning will pay dividends later. You may also find that your ideas will change as we read and discuss key concepts in the classroom. Don't worry about intellectual conflicts. As long as everyone is genuinely listening to one another, these "conflicts" may help you develop your own ideas (either by changing them or making you articulate them better). Interpersonal conflicts are another matter and they need attending to by the group. It is important to remember that you are not only learning about principles

> for teaching ESL by reading, discussion and application, you are also learning about learning and teaching by learning and teaching with your peers. (You'll need to THINK about that sentence), In other words, you need to step back and reflect on these experiences...

Here, Jerri does two things simultaneously. She directly addresses and gives advice for working collaboratively, and provides support. She also articulates some of her key assumptions and beliefs about groupwork (i.e.: change (based on cognitive growth) is good; intellectual conflict stimulates learning; interpersonal conflict is a group problem (as opposed to individual); learning is embedded in practice; etc.).

The syllabus then continues for a full page (single spaced) about the individual roles within the group, describing the roles of classroom researcher, facilitator, and team members (which we'll look at a little further on). It concludes the Small Group Meetings section with a weekly schedule for topics in the small groups, although it states, "The following is a <u>suggested</u> calendar for groups, intended only as a guideline." For the week of February 4th (the second week of class, but the first small group meeting) the agenda is:

> Teams set up the agenda, talk about responsibilities and resources, negotiate explicit norms and expectations, talk about facilitator's role, decide who will be responsible for which tutorial articles.

Here, Jerri explicitly states her desire for the first small group meeting to focus on process, as opposed to the actual tasks the groups are to do.

So we'll turn to the second class (and first small group meeting), to see how the conceptions of small group work continued to be developed (and understood).

The Second Class

The second week, Jerri started class by assigning students their group placement, and having the small groups meet before the full class. It was Jerri's design that the groups should spend this first meeting getting to know each other, and discussing collaborative learning, group work, and individual roles, as she directly stated on the agenda in the syllabus (above). To this end, she verbally provided information and directions to focus the meeting on these issues. Here are the instructions she gave after ensuring that people knew which group they were in, where they were to go, and what time and where they were to reconvene (transcript-2/4/92).

J: ...Now, the other thing to think about is this- when you're in your groups, you have to sort out who's going to do the tutorial next week, so one of you has to do the tutorial, make sure you see me before you go. Whoever decides in your group to do the tutorial next week see me before you leave. ...The major thing there- are you listening so far? Do you know what you're doing? Now, today, in your groups, I would like you to focus on some of the roles. When you talk about the facilitator's role, the cooperating teacher's role, and the members' role, how you're gonna work ( ). Have a little bit of an idea of how you want the group to run. Think about those issues. At least one person, usually two or three people, (are) in each group who have done the groupwork before. So, you know the kind of things that need to be done, you know the kinds of tensions that arise, the kinds of things that need to be worked out. So those are the kinds of things you want to talk about today. I have some guidelines

to stimulate your talk, you don't have to follow this, but this will, I will pass this out now, it says group project at the top, and it just gives a little bit of idea of what your task will be, some ideas about working with one another, successfully, so you should, you might look at that. One of them talks about some guidelines for group process, the other has to do with getting through the tasks in the time that you have to do that, and the only thing that I want to stimulate, the facilitators talked about this last week, so I ( ), who wants to be in charge of turn-taking. They're not the ones in charge of turn-taking. So you need to work out how that works. That doesn't mean they don't have a role and you're gonna negotiate ( ) the facilitator, that's the one thing which they know that's not it. That doesn't mean they can't talk. They can talk, they can become part of the group, but they shouldn't be the ones to say, "Okay, your turn to talk, your turn to talk," and that is the one thing you need to think about in your negotiation of facilitator. Okay. The other thing is, next week you will be given a packet of some extra readings that might help you with the project that you have. You will be analyzing, remember, ( ) the syllabus or textbook and we have some reading in a packet for the group, depending on how you set it up and how you want to do that, you can describe ( ) resources for the group. You can decide if they're worth it or not, it's up to you. ( ) and you will have that next week. I imagine next week, what you ought to do is try to think about how you're gonna structure the task stuff, where this week don't worry too much about task at this point.

Let's look at the assumptions contained within this speech, and some of the dynamics it sets up. Initially, Jerri's concerned about the tutorial, for a practical reason. She needs to hand out the articles immediately to those who will be attending the first one, which will take place before the next class meets. So she begins, in lines 1-5, by announcing that someone from each group needs to see her before they leave to meet in their groups, which they are doing immediately. The groups now have to decide who will go first before they even meet, or know each other. The syllabus has, as part of this first meeting

agenda, "decide who will be responsible for which tutorial articles." But the students have not had time to negotiate together with their groupmates how the process will work, and they are unclear as to what volunteering to "go first" entails, what, indeed, the whole tutorial process entails, first or not.

Next, Jerri addresses group roles, and directly announces (in lines 7-8) "Now, today, in your groups, I would like you to focus on some of the roles." She places process before task, and asks the groups to discuss the collaborative process before engaging in it. As we will see, this engendered resistance from my group. For some, this format is new, and they are not certain exactly what it is that they are to discuss. For all, they fell back on traditional expectations, and attempted to determine specifics about the task in which they were to engage. They actively resisted process talk initially, which we will explore in some detail. Additionally, this statement sets up unequal positions for those in the group. The intention was to set everyone up as a resource, as discussed earlier. And previous experience with this sort of course design was one area of experience about which some group members could contribute information. In fact, Jerri says (in lines 12-26), " At least one person, usually two or three people, (are) in each group who have done the groupwork before. So, you know the kinds of tensions that arise, the kinds of things that need to be worked out. So those are the kinds of things you want to talk about today." In this group, status was conferred on those who could represent this experience. Not only has Jerri indicated that these people have value (and Jerri represents the ultimate

authority), but this collaborative experience is being represented as one sort of "academic" expertise, one that has been highly privileged in this setting. Not only does this set up a dynamic where those who've worked in this way before (i.e. students who have taken a course with Jerri) are privileged, it places the others in positions where they feel they have little to contribute.

In order to counterbalance the naming of the role of facilitator, Jerri goes to some pains to ensure that the role is not pre-defined (see lines 27-35), but that groups negotiate this role, based on the needs of the group. But one criterion for being a facilitator is that you've had some experience with the facilitation process (possibly as a group member, not necessarily as a facilitator). So all facilitators have taken a course with this component before (i.e. with Jerri). Therefore, all the facilitators are immediately positioned as "expert." If they're the ones who know "what kinds of tensions...arise, (what) kinds of things... need to be worked out," then they are, in fact, leading the conversation, assuming a position of authority. So the "negotiation of facilitator" (line 35) is already influenced (although not completely determined) by the way the meeting has been structured.

As mentioned above, Jerri clearly wants this first small group meeting to focus on process, not content. In lines 35-46, she directly tells students that the next week they will receive a packet of readings to help with the tasks, and concludes with, "I imagine next week, what you ought to do is try to think about how you're gonna structure the task stuff, where this week ( ) don't worry too

much about task at this point." As we will see, tensions arose in my group, who clearly felt the need for a focus on task, and an understanding of what they were expected to produce. This, again, I attribute to falling back on old theories in practice, where "playing school," assumed a focus on task, and figuring out what it was you were "supposed" to do (in terms of task), and what the grade was based on. But in this environment, the instructor's voice, represented orally and through the handouts she authored, clearly represented other expectations. So there was tension, even, between two competing components of traditional practice: heeding the authoritative voice of the instructor, and focusing immediately on the nature of the task.

The four-page handout entitled "Group Project" (Appendix B) that Jerri handed out as students were leaving to meet in their groups was another text representing the ideology and language already encountered, another guide for students as they were immersed in this environment. While it was in some ways similar to the syllabus, in others it differed greatly. It began with a brief paragraph focused directly on the task, which was a bit more specific about what the groups were to produce than anything thus far. It began:

> The task assignment is to jointly produce an analysis of an ESL classroom in order to bring out the assumptions about learning and teaching that are operating in the classroom. The analysis will focus on four aspects of the classroom: the syllabus, a task, a sample of classroom interaction and a sample of learner performance.

Here Jerri specifically states what the focus of the groupwork is. Remember in the syllabus she stated, "The task of the group will be to analyze how learning is organized in a local ESL classroom and the underlying assumptions that govern this organization." This explanation, then, builds on that initial offering, and allows students some insight as to what to focus on both in the classroom they are analyzing, and the information and resources provided in the environment (i.e. readings, discussions, etc.). She continues, giving even more focus as to what sorts of analyses and issues "count" in this course (while foreshadowing some of the issues they will encounter):

> In addition to making explicit the assumptions underlying these four aspects of the classroom, the group should try to identify: 1) differing definitions and assumptions of learning and teaching between the students and the teacher and what effect this may have on learning and teaching; 2) differing definitions and assumptions of learning and teaching between the teacher and the evolving philosophies of whole language; 3) continuities and discontinuities between the teacher's assumptions and practice. In the final paper, you should consider what it is you have learned about the nature of theory and practice.

After this single paragraph directed toward the task, she moves on to another section, entitled "Meta Assumptions to Think About." She articulates some of her own assumptions about learning, teaching, and thinking. An example is, " "Assumptions" are negotiated during practice, so you will see that assumptions may change from one activity to the next." The assumptions vary in complexity. This section gives students ideas to play with, a place to begin their

reflections, but also models the process of reflection that is valued in this environment, and that she is encouraging them to do.

The next section is entitled "Guidelines for Group Process," and sets out ten "ideas" that Jerri's "been playing around with." These specifically address interpersonal communication and negotiation, and, again, build on the brief statement in the syllabus. They directly and explicitly give advice as to how to behave, and how to think about group interactions. Let's look, for example, at this one:

> Remember, we are all learning and one of the things we are learning about is that learning is gradual, there is great variation in the rate and route of learning, there are many different strategies, learners need to be in control of their learning, we learn by acting on our worlds and then adapting--that means making mistakes... SO apply this to learning to work in groups.

This accomplishes multiple purposes: 1) it provides language and concepts with which learners can reflect on their own participation and learning in groups; 2) it preaches tolerance and understanding for groupmates, who may be approaching and enacting participation differently; 3) it models a process and manner of reflection on groupwork that enables the learner to abstract away from their own particular experiences, and use them as a learning tool; 4) it asks learners to connect theory and practice.

This section is followed by a brief paragraph entitled "Readings." It suggests ways that the group might divide up the responsibilities for the articles

contained in the packet that Jerri will hand out the following week. Next comes a longer paragraph entitled "Role of Cooperating Teacher." While Jerri intended this to support the teachers in the groups as they were exposed to analysis and critique, it also addresses what I consider to be one of the pitfalls in this sort of classroom analysis, which is a tendency toward "teacher bashing." It's easy to critique others when we are in the position of standing outside a real practice, being performed in real time, and Jerri warns heavily against strong negative judgements of the teacher.

> ...In real life a teacher is dealing with hundreds of contextual factors, many of which are not even conscious. Members of the group will only know a few of those factors. Finally, processing moment by moment is NOT the same as having the luxury of thinking carefully about every little detail. Even a videotape cannot catch the subtle cues that the teacher attends to, nor can any human being be aware of the millions of cues that are available in the context. SO be humble when you do your analysis and be respectful of the teacher. It's very hard work.

We will see that these warnings were not heeded very strongly by my group, which was the only group in which the role of “cooperating teacher” was not filled by a practicing teacher (but by a group member acting as liaison).

The remainder of the document (about one and a half pages) is entitled "Guidelines for Analyses," and gives specific advice for what to focus on in each analysis (individually). This is the only direct source of information that students had as to what concrete issues and activities Jerri expected from them, as they engaged in their tasks. Interestingly, while the members of my group never

referred back to the document for help with group interactions, and seemed unaware that issues of criticism toward the classroom teacher had ever been addressed, this final segment was relied on heavily, and shaped the analyses the group produced. I am, however, getting ahead of myself. We have now examined the two documents that the class members had received prior to the first small group meeting, as well as Jerri's oral instructions. Let's see how the meeting played out, what members' reactions were to all of this, which resources were utilized, and which concepts got taken up.

First Small Group Meeting

The first small group meeting was not a happy one, and was filled with confusion and tension. From the start, the assigned roles (and the ways in which they were presented) strongly influenced the dynamics of this group. Jerri had assigned the roles of "facilitator" and "cooperating teacher," and spent some time, both in class and in the documents she'd handed out, addressing duties and responsibilities of both. While she had set out the other possible roles group members could take (language tutor, teacher, or learner), she'd addressed these only briefly in class and in writing (a total of four lines in the syllabus under "Team Members"), and left it up to the individuals which role they would take on. In fact, it was somewhat unclear how these roles were to relate to the groupwork. Also, when assigning students to their groups for the first time, Jerri had the facilitator for the group stand up, so group members could

recognize him/her, then called out the list of team members, telling them to be sure to follow their facilitator as they broke up. While Jerri intended this to confer membership status on the facilitator, it may also have set up a status differential, and ensured that the facilitator would be the member most recognizable to the groupmates.

In our group, Carlos was the "cooperating teacher" (nominal, in this case, as he wasn't teaching, but was close to an ESL teacher in a nearby city, who had agreed to furnish whatever we needed, with Carlos acting as go-between). Although Jerri had spoken with him at some length about his responsibilities prior to the beginning of the class, he represented himself to the group as not understanding what his role entailed. We will examine his behaviors and representations in this study at length, because it is my claim that the course and participant structure here was not able to accommodate nor value Carlos' beliefs, values, and behaviors, and therefore did not fully recruit his experiences and expertise. This impoverished both the group, who thereby did not have full access to what he potentially might have contributed, and himself, because in being marginalized, he was unable to participate in ways that possibly might have brought him more fully into the discourse.

Assigned to the role of facilitator, I was determined to be open to negotiation as to the function I would play within the group. I did, however, start the meeting, because I had to set up the tape recorder, and ascertain that everyone agreed to be taped, and understood why. This was technically a

function of the research I was undertaking, and not part of the role of facilitator, but this was not a clear distinction at the time. And, in any case, the act itself set up exactly the dynamic that should have been avoided, because by speaking first and "choosing" the first topic, I, in effect, took control.

The group was not terribly interested (at this point) in the taping process. They were, right from the start, concerned about what they were "supposed" to do. So after my brief explanation, and a little bit of preliminary joking and discomfort, they tried immediately to focus on their task. Because of the way in which I had been positioned (including the fact that I had explained about the taping, thereby claiming some expertise related to the class), the questions were aimed toward me.

M: ...but I promise that whatever that ever gets used for, nobody's name will be mentioned.
(pause)
C: Okay, I'm sorta confused about what exactly we're gonna do
K: Yeah, me too...
C: First of all, I don't know anyone here ( )...
(long pause)
M: Okay-lemme... I'm willing to start this today, I'm not willing to be the one running things, y'know, in general...

After I conclude my comments about the taping (line 2), there is a pause. I choose not to speak, trying to "give away" ownership of the conversation. Carlos finally speaks. He voices his confusion (line 4), which resonates with, and is supported by, at least one member of the group (Kate, line 6). But he focuses on activity, not interaction ("I'm confused about what exactly we're

gonna do"). And he tentatively mentions that he doesn't know anyone (line 7), which would be a good opening for introductions. But there is no uptake.

Now it seems that no one knows where to begin, and I, once again, use silence to try to avoid the position they're looking to me to fill (Carlos has been speaking directly to me, the others looking at me). Finally, as it becomes clear that nobody else knows what to say, I agree to their positioning. I do, in fact, know more about the course design and what's expected (by Jerri), but am unwilling to set up this hierarchy within the group. This is the nature of my discomfort, as shown by the false starts, hedging ("y'know"), and hesitations in lines 9-11. So I try to ensure that they understand that this is not an ongoing role for me ("I'm not willing to be the one running things... in general").

Now Carlos focuses directly on his role, and that of Blanca, the teacher of the class we're to analyze. He's concerned not only with discovering his responsibilities, but also how he should represent the project to Blanca. He has the next seven turns in the conversation, directly asking me about various aspects of the classroom component. We discuss this until he is clear about what he will do. He says, "Well, I will get back in touch with you about the taping." He says this directly to me, because I am the one who will videotape the classroom we are studying, and he is setting up the date and time. Next, I take control of the topic, and try to address the group about what is expected from them. However I, too, have my own agenda. While I feel that group members want specific focus on task, and I want to support them, and address

their concerns, I also am focused on directing the conversation toward groupwork and process. In this next segment, I segue very quickly into roles, then process, and ultimately the role of facilitator. My underlying agenda is to begin to negotiate, as early as possible, what my role will be. These excerpts show how it unfolds:

> M: Allright, the roles are... I mean, what the group will do is that over the course of the semester, and Jerri said we would get the packet next week, we will have, I don't know, four or five tasks. By the end of the semester we're supposed to have (all) those four or five tasks completed and written up.
> Each one of those tasks is (a different aspect. One would be an) analysis of the syllabus of the classroom, and one would be an analysis of a material or some materials that are being used in a classroom. One of 'em I think will be bringing in ( ) will be somehow, I think... at any rate the information... the videotape will be used for information, (so those) will be materials that will need to be brought in, but that will be in the packet next week when we know exactly what the tasks are.

This is excerpted from the beginning of my passage, and begins to explain about the tasks, and the materials we might need to accomplish them. I have this information from having worked and consulted with Jerri while she was in the process of constructing the course, and while at the time I perceived it as a resource (something useful that I could contribute to the group), it is also a constraint, as I use it to take away the need for the group to negotiate about this. It is clear, from the last sentence, that I give misinformation, as the information about the specific tasks is in the handout Jerri had just given us as we broke into groups. None of us, however, has had time to read it, as we had just received it,

so no one knew to refer to it at the time. This document then, would become a viable resource only after this initial meeting.

With that brief information on the tasks, I turn to process, then roles.

> And I think the idea is that the group does the tasks (collaboratively), we trade off who writes up the final group analysis and what everybody said so everybody gets to write up one. But again it's not what they have to say, it's a report on what the group said. The teacher's role is just what we said, it's getting that material and having access to that material and bringing it in, and maybe even being able to fill in some gaps that'll come up....

This, as I said, in part reflects my agenda (because I think it's what we're "supposed to" do tonight), and in part is directed towards Carlos' concerns about his role, trying to contextualize what he's to do. In part, however, it reflects the fact that I, myself, am more familiar with the process and roles than I am the specific tasks, and feel most comfortable representing what I know best.

In this same passage, I cover (briefly) how the team roles (as language teachers and learners) might be useful to provide perspectives, and conclude by explicating what I see as the difference between cooperative and collaborative learning. This, finally, triggers the other group members to enter the discussion. And their concern is that we're focusing on the process, and groupwork, and they don't see the need for in-depth discussion of this. Ruth mentions at this point that she's taken another course with a groupwork component (with Jerri), and tries to defend the necessity of being prepared for interpersonal conflicts

and tensions, as well as attesting to the benefits of the experience. So why hasn't Ruth spoken up earlier? Why have I taken on the position of authority? I would attribute this to the roles, to the earlier discussion wherein I claimed that, despite efforts made to prevent it, the role of facilitator had privileged status (publicly) from the start. Ruth, who had not chosen, or been given, a named role, and whom the other group members did not yet know, had a weaker position from which to speak. Jerri had, however, given recognition in her initial verbal instructions to those who had some familiarity with her pedagogies ("At least one person, usually two or three people, (are) in each group who have done the groupwork before. So you know the kinds of things that need to be done..."). And, as discussed earlier, Ruth's entire background aligned her more closely than the others with academic discourse and practices in general, and this practice in particular. Therefore, she feels empowered to speak now, publicly drawing her authority from her previous work with Jerri. This would also explain why Carlos, who did have a publicly named and acknowledged position, took the floor so much more often than the others during this early part of the meeting.

Each member, then, is trying to make sense of this experience by using the tools they have for making sense of schooling-- they are trying to locate (identify) positions (theirs and others), tasks, information (expertise), and authority. This will give them the organizational structure they need within which to locate this particular experience. Usually (in traditional courses) these would

be laid out in ways that would be easily recognizable. Here, they are being asked to negotiate together to interpret this new environment, and to open to question the traditional assumptions, models, and hierarchies. While there are some road signs provided, this newness has caused them to fall back on their theory in practice, and they cannot utilize them yet.

To return to our meeting, I retain the position of control a bit longer, and try to force issues of group process, while acknowledging that they may find it irrelevant at the moment.

> M: ... it not only doesn't always work very, very ( ) smoothly, because people get frustrated with each other, somebody will feel like they're not being listened to, or somebody will feel like they don't really understand something... just different ways people have of communicating, that (different) people have of listening to other people... if you look at the syllabus that Jerri gave (us) actually the focus of them is to talk about group process and it probably sounds silly if you haven't been through it, but it comes to be a lot to talk about.

This is both a direct bid to force a topic they apparently don't want, and an acknowledgement of sensitivity to the fact that they don't want it. It's saying, "I'm sorry, but it's for your own good." On the other hand, there is still an attempt to deny the position of authority, even though I've taken it up. By saying, "If you look at the syllabus that Jerri gave us...," I'm insinuating that she is in the position of authority, not me, and it's her decision and judgement that we need to address this. However, I directly use this to turn the conversation to the role of the facilitator

.

M: So I guess the way I feel, everything's open to negotiation, (if) you have an expectation of me and want (me to do certain things), it might not be my interpretation of the role (of facilitator), okay, you know, that needs to be negotiated, everything gets negotiated. But I think coming into it, the way that I feel about right now is, I've been through Jerri's classes, so I have that background, um, I do have some background in (language acquisition, so if we're) discussing something and I'll know a book, or something- or an article, or something (that would help), I think that what is meant in this particular class for the facilitator (is not to engage in) group task in the same way the rest of the group does.

As stated, I am forcing this topic on the group, it's my agenda, not theirs. And I continue to downplay any notion of authority, or hierarchy within the group. In lines 1-5, I begin by saying that my preferences don't have precedence; to use the language of the culture, we'll "negotiate." But the topic isn't negotiated; I use my positioning (of authority) to insist on this focus. So I am presenting my group with a grand contradiction: I'm not taking control, but I'm going to set the topic (against your wishes, at that). I plunge right in, and insist on putting on the table my interpretation of the role. Possibly this is meant as an opening bid, a way to begin the negotiation, but equally possibly it's meant simply to express what I want to do, and what I feel I can best offer as a resource.

I immediately present the background and "expertise" I feel that I can offer the group. I am giving them the information that I feel will enable them to allow me the position I want. I suggest that what I have to offer is prior experience with Jerri's class, and some knowledge of language acquisition theory (lines 7-10). This is where I want to claim expertise, these are the areas in which I want

them to grant me authority. I could have claimed that I was an assistant professor in an ESL teacher education program, but that might have set up an immediate hierarchy, as it carries a certain status with it (in terms of traditional notions of schooling). So I claimed only the identity that would afford me the role I wanted within the group. I thought that these claims would enable the group to see me as a resource in these two domains (group process from experience with Jerri's class, and academic theory related to language acquisition). And, as indicated in lines 10-12, I did not want them to expect me to engage in the task in the same ways that they did, and hoped to forestall this.

Not surprisingly, I encountered resistance. I'd taken control of the conversation, introduced topics from my own agenda and shortchanged theirs, and tried to impose a view of my role while claiming it was negotiable. This was a lot to swallow, and they cut me off. Actually, only two group members were willing to speak at this juncture, and they took different stances. Kate (who cut me off), said, "I got the feeling that the facilitator was definitely part of the group project," meaning that I should have an equal role and responsibility in doing the actual tasks. This was a display of resistance to the position I was making a bid for (well as evidence of the group's focus and priority on task). Kate felt strongly that I should engage in the task in the same manner as the rest of the group members. Since she is "summoning" me to a position I don't want, I try the tactic of invoking Jerri as expert. I say:

> Again, I think it's open to negotiation, um, to some degree, but Jerri actually explicitly told me, so I don't know, ...I think I would play that (role), but it depends on how everybody feels the most comfortable."

Here I am in a bind. If I refuse her "summons," I am not negotiating. And yet I feel that she does not understand the role of facilitator (having never been in this sort of course design before). So I try to put the decision on the others, knowing that at least two of them have had prior experience with Jerri's courses, and hoping that they agree with me.

Carlos was trying to make sense of all this, and his offerings up until now had been mostly questions and requests for clarification. At this point, he takes a turn to ask "Are you taking this course for credit?" Again, to me, this is an issue of positioning. Are we on equal ground? Do we have the same interests? Are we all working toward a grade? The answers to these to questions might affect whether we share an equal workload, and which tasks we take on.

During this segment of the conversation, I am at somewhat of a loss as to how to proceed. The conversation is focused on the topic of facilitator, but we are making no headway. In addition to the two members already mentioned, Ruth is participating from time to time, but mostly representing herself as someone who's been through this before, and voicing little opinion as to the role of facilitator. The other two members, Huei Ling and Thanh, are silenced. Both are from other language and education backgrounds (Chinese and Southeast Asian, respectively), and both have limited English skills, although Thanh much

more so. They have, at this point, no way to negotiate for position in the group (no previous experience that they feel they can utilize to make sense of this one, and, in Thanh's case, possibly not enough proficiency in English to adequately track the conversation), so they say nothing. We will see more of this later.

Since we were not going to settle on a preliminary agreement as to role, I attempted to at least accomplish something concrete. I proposed keeping dialog journals with the group. I made an argument that it's important for the facilitator to have individual contact with group members, and to have an open channel of communication. Now, since the group has little understanding of the tasks they are to do, or the dynamics and processes of this sort of group work, that (in hindsight) seems rather silly. How are they to know it's important, or what sort of support they'll need?

None the less, two of the group members assent readily, in fact, they are excited at the prospect. Why are Ruth and Huei Ling willing, and the others not? Ruth has already taken a course with Jerri, where, in her group, she kept a dialog journal with the facilitator, and found it a rewarding experience. Huei Ling has taken a course with me before in which we worked together closely, and is therefore willing to work closely with me again, and share insights and perceptions. One thing noteworthy here, though, is that these two, who are eager to accept this proposal from me, neither accepted nor even negotiated the proposals I made as to my role in the group, even though both have had prior experiences as members of groups with a facilitator. My interpretation of this

would be that in agreeing to engage in this activity, they are committing only themselves, and have some image in their head as to what they're committing themselves to. For the other (the negotiation of the role of facilitator), they need a voice and position within the group from which to speak, and neither has yet found it (although Ruth has made a tentative claim). Nor have they yet come to feel that they understand the hierarchy, positioning, tasks or dynamics of this group, so they do not yet have a mental image of how the role of facilitator might best help them.

As for the other three, their reactions are already somewhat predictable. Thanh says nothing. Carlos responds with questions. He wants to know what they will write about-- is it a requirement? Are other groups doing this? This is where we begin to notice a pattern that we will continue to observe with Carlos- he appears to want to negotiate and actively verbally engage with the group during meetings, but commits to do as little as possible outside of this time. And Kate directly resists. She has already resisted my bid for my role in the group, and here she once again confronts my authority, this time in attempting to "summon" others into a position I open up for them. She does not feel keeping a journal with me will be of benefit to her, but she stops short of refusing. When I list benefits, and again invoke Jerri ("...every semester that Jerri's done it..."), she volunteers to keep a journal with another group member, but not me. I counter by agreeing with her right to exchange with another group member, but

insist that it be in addition to me, not instead of me. Here I directly assert the authority I've taken on, I claim it as my right to exert pressure for this activity.

The next segment of the meeting is filled with discussion of the tutorial and exchange of phone numbers. Before concluding, however, the group comes back around to discussing task and process, but this time Ruth takes control of the conversation. Ruth, as we will see, is task-oriented, and very focused and efficient. She speaks up to ensure that group members know what they are to do for the following week.

R: Yeah, so I think if we read that ( ) we'll talk more about it. And you may as well
H: The readings?
R: Well, the group... I feel like, I mean, if, our tendency with the group is to like, like now we're just trying to figure out what we should be, figuring it out a little bit ( )
C: ( ) we all to produce a paper or as a group we produce a paper ( )
M: Yeah, I think there's an individual paper due at the end of the semester.
C: Yeah, what about the folder?
M: That's the group all together.
C: All together?
R: All together. I think as we go along it's going to be (easier) to talk about it ( )
M: ( ) like the beginning of Methods? I mean I always felt that way at the beginning of these classes, like ( )
R: Yeah, I don't know. ... with Methods, I don't know, there was a content
H: Yeah, there was a content ( )
R: We haven't even talked about content and I think that loses a lot of people because we're talking about this (process) in sort of a very abstract sense (to) start off ( )and get it right ( )
M: Focus.
R: Focus, to bring us together as a group and then look at what's happening as group interactions, as
K: I think with content you'd all have a voice to contribute, too, you'd tend to know what's going on, ( )
M: Yeah, I think by next week maybe...

It is clear, from this segment, that Ruth has been reflecting about the meeting thus far, and is frustrated by what she considers our lack of "focus", i.e. a task-oriented agenda. In lines 1-2, she tries to focus on task, by suggesting that the group read the handouts for the following week, which she feels will give concrete topics for discussion. She claims her initial position here, again, by invoking her previous experience with this sort of course format with Jerri (having taken a Methods class with Jerri). This gives her a position from which to speak, an area where she can claim some authority. And she uses this for two purposes; to voice her dissatisfaction with the way the meeting has gone (see particularly lines 21-23), while simultaneously attempting to reassure groupmates that it will get better. In lines 4-6, she begins to voice her reflections that the group has been groping toward a purpose, but Carlos interrupts with a concrete question about what exactly they are required to produce. Again, we see that Carlos wants to know what his responsibilities will be (lines 7-8). When I answer (lines 9-10) out of the position I've taken on as presiding authority on course content, he still wants more clarification. Ruth, frustrated, tries to intervene (lines 14-15), to say that his confusion is temporary, and to reassure him that it will get easier ("I think as we go along it will get (easier) to talk about..."). I then do a solidarity bid, happy that someone else has taken a position of authority, and wanting to reinforce her claim. So I directly refer to Methods, a course we've both taken (although at different times).

Ruth uses this comparison to explicitly state her concern-- that we have not been focusing on content. She feels that a lot of the dynamics would

Ruth uses this comparison to explicitly state her concern-- that we have not been focusing on content. She feels that a lot of the dynamics would become clear, and/or work themselves out, if group members could actually engage in an activity together, instead of talking about how they might do it. In fact, Ruth stated this in her first journal entry to me, which she gave me the following week. Huei Ling echoes her (line 20), clearly agreeing. This is the first public indication we've had that Huei Ling has experience with this sort of course design. Ruth has used this experience as a position from which to speak, Huei Ling hasn't. But we will see with Huei Ling that her interest is in academic research and theory, and she wants "hard information." The group process is somewhat interesting to her, but she is not willing to expend much time or energy on it. Content (by her definition, academic research) is what she wants, and where she ultimately finds her position within the group.

Ruth continues (lines 21-23) with her efforts to bring the group together and reassure them. By saying, "I think that loses a lot of people because we're talking about this (process) in sort of a very abstract sense...," she's really saying "I know you feel lost, but don't worry, here's why, and it won't stay this way." I, again, try to support what she's saying (line 24). Kate uses Ruth's words as a lifeline (lines 27-28), here she can back off from her hostile stance toward me, voice some of her frustration, and interact collegially with another group member. She can directly acknowledge that she's felt she doesn't "have a voice to contribute," or "know what's going on." Telling, also, is the use

members make of language in this passage. Ruth's pronoun of choice is "we," in virtually all of her utterances. Carlos also is inclusive, and while Huei Ling doesn't use a pronoun, she clearly builds on Ruth's statements, showing solidarity. Only in Kate's contribution do we see "you," which is in startling contrast ("you'd all have a voice to contribute"). She, alone, distances herself. And this supports my claim that the group members who have not been assigned specific roles, and have never experienced a course like this before, initially feel that they have no position from which they feel they can speak. Kate, of course, has spoken quite articulately in contesting authority. But this, to her, is not a recognizable position as a group member.

Although, as noted earlier, Jerri has suggested other possible positions (i.e. language learner), these positions are not taken up. This is interesting because theoretically, this sort of design (especially the groupwork) is intended to validate and utilize everyone's previous knowledge and experiences. But in this case, at least up 'til now, it would seem that the only experiences being used to give members a voice are experiences specifically associated with this sort of educational experience. We will see this tension played out in subsequent meetings, as well.

At this point, I would like to sum up, and provide evidence for, some of the patterns I claim are starting to develop, as group members begin to negotiate and take on positions and identities within the group. In order to do this, I have culled the transcript of this meeting, and counted how many times each group

member spoke. In addition, I provide a breakdown of some of the types of turns members took. I coded for specific functions, which are as follows:

1) organization: turns explicitly focused on organizing the topic and flow of conversation (i.e. "...so let me tell you something to kinda get back to this...", or "I'm sorry to interrupt you- we need to refocus");

2) request (information): turns where group members specifically request any type of information (facts, opinions, ideas, or personal information), either from an individual or the group at large (i.e. "What are we supposed to do today?", or "Do you think that's true?");

3) request (clarification): questions from group members when they feel they haven't understood a point or concept that's been stated, or want to check others' understandings (i.e. "Does that make sense, or not?", "You're saying you're teaching in a regular class?");

4) answer: a participant's answer to either sort of request:

5) new topic: the introduction of a new topic by a participant.

There were certainly many other functions speech served in the meeting, and many turns fulfilled more than one of these functions. But it was my intention to choose categories that would display the sorts of positions group members were claiming. Here is the breakdown.

Table 1. Characteristics of turns (2/4/92)

	Organization	Request Information	Request Clarification	Answer	New Topic	Number of Turns
Maggie	1	3		6	6	34
Carlos		4	1	3	2	24
Ruth	3		2	3		10
Kate		3				7
Huei Ling			1			2
Thanh						0

So how does this support the picture I've drawn of the meeting thus far? It is clear from the number of turns that I speak more than others. I introduce the most new topics, and I answer the most questions. Whether that was my intent or not, the numbers clearly show the pattern. And Carlos asks the most questions, and takes the most turns of the remaining group members. Carlos' questions, as I've claimed, were largely practical, wanting to know specifics about what was expected. And Carlos, also, answers several questions. The two of us clearly dominate the discussion, and we are the ones who have the preassigned roles. It is primarily from these roles that we speak.

Ruth takes ten turns, although eight of these are in the last few minutes of the meeting. She speaks out to organize; she does not want to leave in confusion. It is she who publicly criticizes the conversation we've been having, stresses the focus on task ("We haven't even talked about content and I think that loses a lot of people..."), and tries to set tasks for the next week. She speaks from her past experiences with these sorts of course designs.

Kate speaks seven times. Three times she requests clarification, and she never provides answers, nor even asks for information, which validates her claim that she doesn't feel she has "a voice to contribute," although, as already discussed, she does speak clearly. And Huei Ling speaks twice, once to ask for clarification, and once just repeating someone else's words. Thanh does not speak at all.

These numbers indicate support for the dynamics I've claimed thus far. To finish up with this first meeting, let's return to Jerri's directions (both verbal and in the agenda), and see how they played out. In the agenda, the guidelines for this week stated "Teams set up agenda." Well, that didn't happen (with the exception of the agreement to read the articles). The group members had to negotiate understandings as to the purpose, so were not yet ready to set up an agenda to meet it. Then came "talk about responsibilities and resources." Again, without having negotiated the tasks or dynamics in which they were to engage, they were not yet ready to talk about the responsibilities they needed to take on to accomplish them. Nor could they discuss resources, as they hadn't yet discovered what they could offer as resources (what their relevant expertise was), nor what outside resources they'd need (without understanding the tasks). The same goes for the next area, "negotiate explicit norms and expectations". Not only did they not know what group work norms and expectations might or should be, most had no voices yet from which to negotiate. The next one, "talk about facilitator's role", we did, albeit extremely unproductively. But I maintain that we did it only because one of us (me) felt empowered to bring it to the table, and speak, because I had a position from which to speak, both in being named as facilitator, and feeling as if I had some prior knowledge and experience that "counted" in that area. It was unproductive because I was the only one who felt empowered to speak about it. Kate did offer some resistance, but was ineffective precisely because she was inexperienced. She could neither clearly

articulate a reasonable argument, nor provide an alternate model for the role. This placed me in the more powerful position. The last area, "decide who will be responsible for which tutorial articles," was partially accomplished. The group decided who would be responsible for attending the tutorial the following week, as this was an immediate need, and an uncomplicated, concrete task. Just the sort of thing Ruth felt we should be engaging in to get started!

My field notes from this meeting confirm my claims about the tensions present at the meeting. I recount multiple instances of Kate's resistance to me, Carlos's concerns as to his role, and Ruth's frustration at the lack of "accomplishing" anything. As it turns out, we were not the only group to feel discomfort and frustration. Other facilitators voiced similar results when we met as a group. So I reiterate my claim that this initial confrontation between the traditional "grammar of schooling" and this post progressive pedagogy caught students between their long embedded notions of schooling and learning, and the realities of this particular environment. It created a disequilibrium, where students struggled to attach the systems and concepts from their old views and practices to this new environment, and to find their position and voice within it. Some group members made tentative strides toward doing this, by invoking named positions and/or close allegiance to prior experiences of this sort. Others (particularly those who could not find relevance in their prior experiences, or those whose prior experiences were not afforded status in this environment)

could not. Now we'll explore the next several weeks, to see how students came to situate themselves within this environment, and make sense of the structure.

CHAPTER 5

VOICE AND POSITIONING

Before we explore further how the dynamics continued to develop, I would like to explicate my second claim, as I have already begun to use it as an interpretive tool. The initial claim was focused on general conceptions of authority and expertise, where they're located in the environment, how they're negotiated, and the work they do in organizing learning experiences. This one focuses more on the individuals' roles and contributions within the group.

First, I will propose the appropriateness of the concept of voice. Bailey (1993), in his work on collaborative group work, defined voice as "the ability to speak and be heard." I will adopt this definition, and stress the importance of both components. In this group, I contend that members did not speak until they identified a position from which they could do so. This we have already seen in the interactions of the first meeting. Additionally, though, speaking alone is not enough, the proposal must be taken up. I ultimately define "taken up" to mean used and recast to fit appropriately when needed. When initially proposed, an idea/concept must be acted upon, incorporated into the group discourse, and/or publicly acknowledged in some way. Without this, it has no chance to become a part of the group discourse, and it is through this discourse that the group is negotiating meaning.

My claim is, then, that group members struggled to find a voice within the group. And these voices were shaped by, and co-constructed with, the individuals' identity within the group. And these identities were negotiated amongst the members. Members would make knowledge claims based on positions wherein they felt they had some expertise. In some cases, their groupmates granted them authority in these positions, in which case the claim was usually taken up. In other cases, members tried to claim authority in positions that the group did not acknowledge, or allow.

This was the motivation behind the initial naming of roles (both assigned, i.e. facilitator, and suggested, i.e. language learner), that each group member would have a particular area, or set of experiences, that would be recognized as relevant, where they could claim an authoritative voice. They could feel that they had something useful to contribute, and others would recognize the relevancy and authority. However, the named roles, in most cases, bore little relation to the positions the group members came to take. Certainly the roles of language learner/tutor/teacher were not recognizably spoken from in any consistent way.

Of the assigned roles, that of facilitator was underdefined and initially was little more than a title, so the facilitator had to negotiate a position wherein the group would concede her authority. The title alone did not afford her "expert" status with groupmates. The cooperating teacher was the one exception. Because Carlos was the liaison with the classroom teacher, and actually spent

time in the classroom, this was a position allowed to him, and one of two positions from which he came to speak.

It is my claim that, after an initial period of negotiation, people settled into specific roles within the group, and their contributions came from these identities. There are others that they could have taken, but didn't, as we will see. And if they spoke from other positions, there was no uptake. Nor did group members often proactively summon others into positions. Let's look at the individuals, and I will briefly summarize the roles they took on. For now, I will not offer proof, but these will be substantiated in the ensuing analyses.

Carlos, as already stated, spoke from two positions. One was as liaison to (and representative of) Blanca, the teacher whose classroom we were analyzing. The other position was as a Latino, where he represented a variety of aspects of living life as a minority, and as a Latino in particular. He represented the community, home life, ways of thinking and behaving, and schooling experiences of minorities.

Ruth came to represent the voice of the practicing teacher. This is particularly interesting, because at the time of the first group meeting, she had not yet begun to teach (although she didn't make a bid for this identity until further on in the semester). But she consistently represented classroom experiences, and teachers' perspectives. This is also noteworthy because Thanh had at least ten years of teaching experience, which was never represented except upon direct questioning. Ruth also had the position, as we

saw in the first meeting, of having experience with this type of class and learning experience, having worked with Jerri before. Again, so had Huei Ling, but Ruth held this position publicly, and spoke from it, and Huei Ling did not.

Huei Ling came to hold a different sort of position. Her interest was in the intellectual content, the readings and theory. She was interested in the analyses, but in an abstract, theoretical way. Perhaps, in part, this came from being a relative newcomer to the U.S., with little experience with or knowledge of our public school systems. But the group came to rely on her for interpretations of the readings, and applying the theory to the aspects of classroom practice that they analyzed. So her position became that of representing the written texts (other than those authored by Jerri). English was her second language, so she could have represented her own language (and culture) learning experience, and the experience of being a newcomer here. She also could have represented a dramatically different educational system. But she didn't, nor was she invited to.

Thanh never came to hold a recognizable position. Her English language skills did not seem to be advanced enough to enable her to participate in the analytic conversations. Mostly she said nothing, and when asked a direct question didn't seem to understand it. Several times she was asked questions as a representative of the school and children we were looking at, as she was a bilingual teacher in that school, and even taught some of the same children that were in Blanca's class. But the questions had to be rephrased and explained

multiple times before she could answer, and often her answer wasn't recognizably related to the question, even then. It is interesting, as a side issue, to examine the scaffolding Thanh received from the group-- who tried to create a space for her, when, and how. But for now, in total, she did not come to find a recognizable position as a contributing group member.

Kate held the most subtle position. As you can see from her line "I think with content you'd all have a voice to contribute...," she had trouble finding a position from which she could claim some expertise. She was a pre-service teacher, and this was her first course with Jerri. And she could not see the relevance or value of her experiences to the group. She did, in fact, have lots of relevant experiences, and important perspectives she could have added. But these connections she never publicly made. So I will characterize the role she came to play as that of learner. Certainly she did speak, and others listened. And she was comfortable in her participation (but not, of course, at first). But when engaging in the tasks, her speech acts were mostly questions, and hypotheses thrown out to the rest of us for comment and/or approval. She took on the stance of making informed guesses (informed by the ongoing work in this class), but did not make knowledge claims, per se, nor position herself as an authority.

And I came to take on the role of facilitator, though perhaps not as I had envisioned it initially. Although I did tend to be the one to focus the group, and do some timekeeping and organizational tasks (though Ruth did some, too),

mostly I represented the academy. I consistently participated in conversations by taking members' contributions (which tended to be practical, and in non-academic language), and either rephrasing them, using the privileged vocabulary, or sometimes even reframing them, and showing how the issues and theory from our Second Language Acquisition (L2A) class could be applied to and contextualize various aspects of Blanca's classroom practice. We will see multiple examples where I explicate academic theory, and the group incorporates it into their discussion (or not). Interestingly, this is the position I proposed in the first group meeting, if you remember, (..."I do have some background in [language acquisition]...").

So those are the primary positions and roles people took on within the group, and they determined both what they offered the group, and what the group looked to them for. The roles determined which authority/expertise/discourse they drew on, and which ones their groupmates sanctioned for them. This affected the contributions and language of individual group members, and ultimately shaped the group discourse. We will follow these positions and contributions throughout the data, both to see how they shaped the discourse, and how they shaped individual learners' public interpretations of the data.

To return to our earlier discussion of authority and expertise, students were looking to create a structure within which they could locate positions from which they could contribute. We looked at the larger environment; at where

authority and expertise resided, and were represented, within the environment. Whole language theory holds, as one of its fundamental tenets, that learners can (and should) act as resources for one another, that all come with knowledge and experiences from which others can learn. So we now have a picture of a complex environment, where learners need to identify expertise and authority in multiple places, simultaneously, and find a way to access them as scaffolds when needed. Looking outside the group for expertise and authority isn't enough. Members need to come to find new positions for themselves within this new environment, in order to understand what it is that they have to contribute, as well as come to see new ways of contextualizing their classmates, and being able to utilize them in the learning process.

Now we'll continue with our group meetings, and see how some of these concepts continue to develop.

Second Group Meeting

At the beginning of the first group meeting, as I've already indicated, I made an effort not to assume control of the group. After one of the lengthy silences (where I refused to take the lead), Carlos suggested that we all introduce ourselves. I thought this was great, because we could come to know each other a bit, and begin to explore what backgrounds we each had that could be relevant to our work. The group assented to this, but Kate began by stating

only her name, then looking to her neighbor to take his turn. From my field notes:

> I suggested that they might want to know other things about each other, maybe about language or teaching experience, but they said no. Ruth then said they'd learn about each other as they worked together. Again, I was uncomfortable with that, but felt they needed to make the decision, and they were agreed. So we all said our names. Then they wanted to clarify the syllabus...

So throughout that first meeting, we knew very little about each other. We see, once again, that the interest was in the task, and course expectations, not the process of groupwork.

After that first meeting, as I've said, I felt very uncomfortable, and spent considerable time during the week reflecting on what had transpired, and what I could do to lighten the atmosphere and tension. I was primarily concerned with the tension I felt between Kate and myself, although I was aware that everyone felt some confusion and anxiety. I decided that part of my discomfort came from not leveling with them as to the fact that I was a doctoral student, and was in this class to collect data for my thesis. Nor had I been completely forthcoming about my background. I knew that the way I presented myself would affect the dynamics of the group, but I felt that the truth might relieve some of the "authority/expert" tension, and help them understand my motivation and behavior. I also felt strongly that we all needed to know a little more about each other, to come to see how we could utilize each other as resources while doing the tasks. And I decided that, although forcing my agenda would mean

assuming a stance of authority, that it was within my domain (as facilitating the group to look at and work on process issues) to do so.

So at the start of the next group meeting, after some preliminary discussion about the tutorial articles, I plunged right in.

M: Um, I have a question. Well, not a question, it's really something that I wanted to talk about. I did a lot of thinking after last week's meeting about the meeting, and just because the first one a lot, you know, sets a tone, and gets things started. And I was thinking about the process of it, and what was said, and I have the advantage of having the tape, so I can go back and hear some of the things that we said, and that we talked about. And I, there were some things with it that I wasn't so comfortable with, and in hind..., and everyone may have that, or not, I mean I'm only talking about my reaction right now. There were some things in hindsight that I thought maybe I could have said, or could have done, or whatever, that, you don't at the time, cause you're in the middle of it. But one of the things I was thinking, um, is I remember at one point I sorta said, well, you started it out by saying "who are we? Let's see who we are." And, um, I think it was Kate who sorta said first "Well, I'm Kate" and looked at you. And then, kinda, well, I said "do we wanna say something about each other or just the names?". And Ruth said, well, everybody sorta said "oh, just names." And Ruth said, "you know, we'll get to know each other through working together, and it'll come out that way." So, um, (we said) just names, and that was, like, your decision, and so we went around and said names. When I was thinking about this during the week, I thought maybe, and again, it's not for me to say to do this, but, thinking, I was concentrating on group process issues, as opposed to sort of anything else, and I was thinking that if part of the idea of groupwork is that we view each other as resources, and that we each come in with unique sorts of experiences and backgrounds, and, maybe contribute that to the product, I sorta thought maybe it might have been better if we did say something about, you know, well, I don't know, whatever people think is important for this, but it might be what our experience with education is, or something about our backgrounds, because this, so as we work together, we know who

35 is bringing what to the group. If we need something, we know
36 strengths, we know backgrounds, we have some sort of starting
37 ground. This, this, do people object to that, or agree with it, or,
38 not feel anything about it?

Now let's take a look at this statement. I was clearly aware of, and addressing, lots of issues simultaneously. I had three main purposes behind this act: 1) to be sure that this time the focus was on group process; 2) to get them to share information that I believed was crucial to our mission; and 3) to set up a structure wherein I could explain my own purpose and background.

In order to achieve these purposes, I had to convince them to engage in an activity to which I knew they would be resistant. So I employed several tactics. I directly positioned myself as an authority on groupwork (lines 28-32), and proffered some theory ("if part of the idea of groupwork is that we view each other as resources..."). This is couching my request in the language privileged by the course, and directly used by Jerri, thereby claiming privileged status for myself as a knowledgeable representative.

However, I clearly operated out of my understanding of this group's current dynamics. The tone was altogether hesitant, and deferring. I was concerned, as always, about issues of positioning and control. I was aware of the tensions that already existed, and wanted to ease them. I also took great care not to infer that anyone did something wrong, and even avoided naming any member as responsible for the decisions of the week before. I began by saying that I had done "a lot of thinking" (line 2), but immediately did repair work,

so as not to sound as if I was saying that I cared more, or was more reflective, than the others. So in lines 6-8 I claim, "...and I have the advantage of having the tape, so I can go back and hear some of the things that we said, and that we talked about." In other words, I'm saying that they shouldn't feel badly if they didn't reflect, and they shouldn't assume that I'm in a position of authority because I did, it's purely circumstantial because I have the tapes. Again, I'm trying not to assume a stance of being completely in control of the group, only of being a member voicing a concern. And I do this again in stating, "There were some things in hindsight that I thought maybe I could have said, or could have done, or whatever, that, you don't at the time, cause you're in the middle of it." (lines 11-13). I know that this is not true, that the things I now want to happen are the same things I wanted to happen last week, and that other members' resistance kept from happening. But I'm taking the blame for the problem I'm about to name: that we didn't cover what we should have the week before. I claim that *I* didn't say or do what I should have, when I actually did suggest this. And then I relive that portion of the meeting (lines 14-23), to make clear that it was nobody's fault. And when I did name Ruth as the source of the proposal to only say names, I repaired that immediately to say "everybody" (line 19). I then repair further by ascribing to Ruth good and thoughtful intentions for the move ("we'll get to know each other through working together, and it'll come out that way") (lines 20-21). I also portray my understanding that introductions are not high on their list of priorities, that they are more concerned, at this time, with the

task itself, by using the production of the analyses as the ultimate reason for engaging in this activity ("... contribute that to the product...," lines 29-30).

To exemplify further my hesitancy to assert authority, ascribe blame, or intensify animosity, let's look at my use of mitigators, particularly "sorta" and "kinda." I do not use them until I launch into the recount of the previous meeting. Then (in lines 14-19), I use them four times, each before a statement that is potentially dangerous. I begin by saying (line 14) "...I sorta said..." If I continued with the sentence I had started, I would be claiming that I had controlled that event, been the one to propose and structure it. Instead, I backtrack, and follow by "...well, you started it out by saying..." (to Carlos). Then, I say, "I think it was Kate who sorta said first..." (line 16). Now, I'm aware that the most problematic tension is between Kate and myself, so I hardly want her to think I blame her for not saying more. Next (in lines 17-18) I say, "And then, kinda, well, I said "do we wanna say something about each other..."

Here I'm potentially in quicksand, because I'm contradicting my claim that I didn't think of this last week, and stating that I tried to get them to do the "right" thing, and they were "wrong." Hence the use of the double hedges (kinda, well). But, for all the hedging, there was no other way than to just say it. And, as stated, I then begin to claim (line 19), that it was Ruth who was "wrong," but this I repair quickly by saying, "...well, everybody sorta said..." Of course, it's not a lot better to claim that everyone made the "wrong" decision.

The only other use I make of these particular mitigators is in line 30, where I say, "I sorta thought maybe it might have been better if we did say something about..." Again, I'm contradicting them, pointing out that they made the "wrong" decision. And there are many other instances of hesitancy, repair, and other devices that signal the difficulty of accomplishing my particular goal in this group at this time. But having made the points I wanted to make, I end by (hesitantly) asking them what they want to do (lines 37-38), giving them every possible option ("object," "agree," "not feel anything").

I am initially met with silence. It is Thanh who breaks the silence by asking what we're supposed to do today. I then continue with my role (from last week) of representing the course, and admitting that we're supposed to "...worry about tasks and maybe these readings," but continue with a rationale of why it's important to share information about ourselves first. To which Carlos responds with, "...so in other words you just would like to do that whole part all over again." This is said slowly and hesitantly, which I interpret as resistance, although it could be a move to align himself with me. But when I tell him that it can be short, and reiterate the kinds of information I think might be relevant ("What we want out of it, what kind of educational background we have..."), he says, "Okay." And then Ruth quickly assents, and that carries the group.

The conversation that follows has a friendly, open tone, in part set by Kate, who goes first and shares quite a bit of information. But all members are interested in each other, and ask questions, and this segment goes a long way

in breaking down some of the tension, and having people begin to feel more comfortable with each other. We will look at some of the individual contributions, to see what identities people proposed to the group, and how, and then ultimately track (throughout the semester) which aspects of these were taken up, and which weren't.

After the group assented to this activity, I asked, "Who wants to start?" There was a long pause, which Kate broke by volunteering. Here's her first contribution:

K: My name's Kate. (all laugh) And, um, I'm taking this course to get certification, at the middle high school level, to teach ESL, and because I'm student teaching right now in social studies. I student taught last semester in Grantwood, high school level, and now I'm student teaching at the middle school. And, so, I'm, this is my first course in any type of ESL, uh, it's my first ESL course of any type. I grew up in Tokyo and Hong Kong. And, um, so having another language around me has always been part of my life. But, um, I've never done it formally, although I've studied languages informally, and then formally, (I wanted to study) about teaching languages, and facilitating language learning.

This passage reveals much about Kate's belief in the value of her experiences for this particular enterprise. What she actually discloses is a wealth of prior experiences from which she, and her groupmates, could draw. She is student teaching at the middle school level, and spent the previous semester student teaching at the high school level (lines 1-6), which is the level of the students in Blanca's class. So she has direct experience in classrooms with this age group. Also, Grantwood is the city adjacent to that in which Blanca teaches, and they have extremely similar profiles, cultures, and minority

representations. So she most likely has experience with kids from similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Instead of capitalizing on this experience, she voices her inexperience with ESL ("...this is my first course in any type of ESL, uh, it's my first ESL course of any type", lines 6-7). She follows this pattern again with her next offering, saying that she "...grew up in Tokyo and Hong Kong. And, um, (that) having another language around (her) has always been part of (her) life." (lines 7-9). Here's another set of experiences that could bear directly on the analyses the group had to do: she has direct experience with living in other countries and cultures, being surrounded by other languages, learning other languages in native environments, being schooled in other countries. But instead of portraying these as potential resources, she immediately offers a disclaimer, "But, um, I've never done it formally, although I've studied languages informally..." (lines 9-10). Here she represents her underlying view of schooling as "formal study." Her past experience with school is that lived experiences don't count as knowledge, it's what you learn in classrooms that does. So she has not made the shift to the perspectives of this class, and it is easy to see why she's resistant to the process work, and wants to focus on the task. She reiterates this by saying, "...and then formally, (I wanted to study) about teaching languages, and facilitating language learning" (lines 10-11). Again, her previous experiences learning and teaching don't count, she feels that she will learn how to teach languages by "formal study."

These patterns are repeated throughout the ensuing conversation with Kate, where groupmates (primarily Ruth and myself, who seem to have voices with which to engage in this because we feel some authority from our past work in collaborative groups) ask her questions, and draw her out further. She reveals that she's fairly fluent in conversational Japanese (but not reading and writing), and that she spent part of jr. high and high school in schools in Japan and Hong Kong. In fact, she reflects on the differences in the influence the languages had on her, based on her age and the environment she was in. So here is an identity that was available to her, from which she could have made valuable contributions, but, despite keen interest at this point from groupmates, these experiences do not resurface. Nor do group members solicit them.

Kate also tells us of her desire to teach overseas, in an international school, and this is the reason for obtaining ESL certification. I then say, "And so you've been through all (the education) coursework, if you're down to your student teaching." Here I am referring to her previous knowledge and experience specifically with the field of education, another possible resource. I am in effect, offering her a position. And Kate responds with, "Right, right. And I even have my certification in social studies in high school already." So here is evidence of "formal learning," something that might count to Kate. But she never explicitly offers insights during the analyses that are recognizably from her formal study of education, or her previous coursework.

It would seem that Kate, early on, positions herself as a learner, one who is inexperienced in the field of ESL. And although there is evidence that she takes on the identity of a learner, and portrays the behaviors of a learner consistent with traditional schooling, she does not offer her prior experiences as a resource to the group. Nor do they solicit them.

The next turn is Ruth's, who keeps it short and simple.

> R: ...I'm working towards certification in both social studies and ESL for the high school level. And, uh, this is my third ESL course, I guess, with Jerri, Linguistics, and Methods, so I'm a little bit familiar with how the class works, I guess. And how Jerri teaches. And I've done a lot of work around groupwork previously. And, um, working with collectives, and cooperatives, and the roles of ( ), different group roles.

So Ruth immediately establishes a bond with Kate, in that they have the same areas of interest. And she immediately stakes a claim to a position of authority in groupwork issues, both in general terms, and as specifically situated in this class, based on prior experience with this particular pedagogy. Note, however, the hedging ("uh," "um," "I guess"), which may indicate the same tension I felt between stating resources and claiming authority. Nonetheless, she aligns herself with the practices and experiences that are privileged in this setting. And this positioning the group accepts; it is one of the roles she will assume for the duration of the semester. The only other relevant thing she mentions subsequently is that she has been observing in the Roseville High School ESL classes for the past semester. She has not yet been hired to teach,

so has not yet proposed the position of representing classroom teaching experience.

Huei Ling, also, has a short turn. She simply states the University she began to study in Beijing, then names the one she transferred to. She then says that she's taking this course because she wants to teach ESL. And that's it. I then try to question her, to focus on her experiences being schooled in China. If she would see these as a contribution she could offer, they would, of course, add an interesting perspective to our discussions of education, which are grounded in American ideologies and perspectives. But there was no uptake.

M: But you grew up and went to school in China, and all that kind of stuff?
H: Umm?
M: You grew up...
H: Yeah. In China.
M: and went to school there, elementary school, and high school and
H: yeah, and college and I went into teaching college, and then I came here.
M: Where did (you) go to school?
H: Shi---(Chinese name), I don't know where it is, not very far from Beijing, about two hours drive.

Huei Ling is giving only the bare facts, and not offering the sort of information I am after. I want her to say something about her educational experiences, but she perceives this as a request to clarify how many schools she went to, and for geographical information. To this she adds only that she wants to teach English when she goes back to China, and that she's studying human development. Both of these could be utilized as positions within the

group (representing language learning in China, and information from a closely related field), but neither come to be.

In this conversation, by the way, Kate makes her only entry thus far (except, of course, when it was her turn). And this is to ask for clarification on Huei Ling's name. She asks her to repeat it, and Huei Ling does, and spells it.

Thanh, on the other hand, offers much more information about herself.

> T: My name is Thanh and I took, and, uh, I take this class for my certification as an ESL teacher at high school level and I, uh, am a bilingual teacher and this is my fifth years in Middleton Public School. I graduated in 1968 in English in my country and I was teacher at high school ( ) for 5 years and I left the country in 1981 and I came here in 1982. And I took the degree of Associated Science and they ( ) and awarded my degree and they made me a bilingual teacher at Middleton in 1987 ( ) so afterward and they accept me to help the Vietnamese students at Middleton. I just finished my degree in December but I need this class or this course for my certification because I want to transfer my ( ) to ESL.

This passage is interesting for two reasons. One, it contains information on multiple domains which could offer a position, and voice, to Thanh within the group. She comes from Vietnam, and was schooled there. Not only does this give her experience with another educational system, it gives her experience coming to the U.S. as a Southeast Asian refugee. One of the children we look at closely in Blanca's class is newly arrived, with a similar background, and Thanh could have provided insights as to her situation. But she didn't, nor was she invited to. She (Thanh) also has finished a graduate (Masters) degree in the U.S., so she must have some experience with higher education, and educational

theory and practice, here. She is teaching in Middleton, in the same school as Blanca, and they even share some of the same students. This is, perhaps, where she has the most to offer, but she does not volunteer information unless specifically asked by other group members, and then only offers minimal information.

The other interesting thing about this passage is the language, itself. While not grammatically correct, she certainly manages to express herself reasonably well. And there is another episode we will see, where she represents the readings and information from her tutorial, where she does this again. And she has certainly managed enough English to earn a graduate degree here. Yet there is evidence that she does not follow the group's conversations, and does not contribute because she does not know what is going on. Perhaps that is because conversation in real time doesn't allow enough time to both process and engage, and perhaps it's because in discussing her own experiences, and the readings (on which she's already attended a tutorial) she's discussing topics she's already familiar with. Other possibilities are that her lack of engagement represents a resistance to this pedagogy, and/or the behaviors and ways of participating that are appropriate here (i.e. asserting one's self, claiming authority, sharing personal information) violate her cultural norms. But whichever reason(s) pertains, this indicates that this particular participant structure does not accommodate this particular learner. Certainly we need to look closely at the dynamics to see how and why she

remained silent, but we also need to consider whether other strategies and activities, including readings and lectures (which can be taped and listened to later), and activities that allow students with limited English to control the time they need to engage, might provide better learning environments for students with limited fluency in English.

Carlos monopolizes much more time than the others. He actually takes up half the meeting. And he does this by proposing lots of his ideas and opinions about education, sharing only a little information about his previous experiences. His initial statement looks like this:

> C: Well, my name is Carlos and I taught for 3 weeks in NYC, I was a Spanish teacher, and I learned the hard way that you should not go into (the) classroom with a lot of passion because passion only takes you so far. You need those skills, sometimes, to recognize what's going on in a classroom. And I learned the hard way also that there is lots going on in the school that-- I guess I'm taking this course, I'm taking this course because it's required. You know ESL's required for a multicultural degree.

At first glance, it would appear that Carlos is using his time to warn us that he is not really willing to invest any caring or emotion in our work. His "passion" was invested in the classroom, he's here because it's "required." He states that skills are more important than passion, and implies negativity about schooling and schools. On the other hand, this also serves the purpose of letting us know that he is a passionate, caring person, with strong thoughts and feelings about education, particularly urban education. He focuses on his experience, and realities of urban education, over the academic work and

background that some of the others have put forward. This, we can see, is directly opposed to Kate's positioning. She does not privilege her past experiences, although they are extremely relevant. For her, it is the formal education that really "counts." Carlos' contribution is in marked contrast, also, to Ruth's portrayal of herself, in that he specifically does not align himself with this pedagogy and practice, in fact, we will see shortly that he represents himself as resistant. Here, already, are the beginnings of the dynamics that come to marginalize him. The only concrete information he shares is three weeks' worth of (apparently difficult) teaching experience in New York, and the fact that he is earning a degree in multicultural education. And in the conversation that follows, which he monopolizes, we never learn anything else specifically about his prior academic experiences. He voices his opinions about schooling, and the University, and higher education by generalized opinions and claims, but does not engage in an extended discussion about any of them. This introduction structure does not accommodate these sorts of critiques.

In his case, his resistance is foreshadowed by his statement, "You need those skills, sometimes, ..." He consistently voices his opinion that the academy bears little resemblance to the realities of the outside world, and does not prepare students for the realities they will encounter in urban classrooms. What he came for is "skills," that's what he needs to make him a better teacher, and he does not see either the process work nor academic theory as providing them.

For example, after this initial statement, I follow up by asking, "Are you going for certification, or just...?". Here is his response:

> C: Ah, no. I'm not seeking any real certification in anything. Whether it comes, it comes, if it doesn't, it's nothing that, it isn't one of my goals. I think that I've become very negative on teaching and I'm hoping, hoping to build some more positive teaching. I think that the realities presented in most of these classrooms don't reflect the realities in the modern schools, especially schools with a high population of minorities. I think
> M: Wait. The reality of the classrooms don't look like the realities of the schools or the communities?
> C: The realities presented in classrooms, leave it at that.

In his first turn here, Carlos deflects the conversation from himself. He denies any interest in certification, again presenting himself from a moralistic, or ethical stance. He wants to be more positive. And then he shifts, and launches into his critique of this institution. He says, "I think the realities presented in most of these classrooms don't reflect the realities in the modern schools..." Now, he's been talking about his own attitudes toward teaching, which he represents as coming from his experience in the NY classroom. So I am not ready for his shift in focus, and don't follow him. But what he's really done is to introduce the University as his topic, "these classrooms" are the graduate classrooms at this University. So this move accomplishes two purposes, it shifts the focus off of himself, and presents his feelings about the problematics of our present situation. He is distancing himself from the University (and by extension our work), and making sure we understand that he thinks it's irrelevant to "real"

teaching. He's engaging because it's "required," but not because he sees value in it.

He goes on to articulate that the course is more relevant for people who will teach in the sort of community in which the college is located (small town, middle to upper-middle class). He says, "...when I look at what's going on here, the topics of interest in these classrooms, are basically the topics of interest in this particular community..." He also seems to voice some discomfort with working with Asians, which is certainly problematic with two Asians in our group. He says:

> C: Oh, just the, just the, I guess, what would you call it, the makeup of this class, let's say, for example. Here they're, in this University, there're a lot more Oriental influence, there's a greater expression say, as opposed to NYC, you would have, let's say somewhere in Fordham, they would, they would break that up.

He continues on to say that in NY, Language Acquisition courses would be taught by ethnicity (one class for Latinos, one for Asians, etc.)

One of the key concepts, proposed right from the beginning by Jerri, and taken up and used throughout the course, was that of negotiation. We will look specifically at that later. But here, this early on, Carlos mocks that idea. He says, "...you know, anybody can negotiate anything with anything if you wanted to." Right from the beginning Carlos is engaging with this course by critiquing, as opposed to openly exploring this new model. He shows his knowledge of the way to "play school", "...oh, now I've got to take Jerri Willett's stock. You know?

Go for it." But, unlike the others, rather than trying to recast this experience in the traditional framework they have already, he uses his existing framework to come to see how he can look like he's "following rules," and meeting expectations, without entering into the real meaning-making aspect. He is critical of graduate coursework, but committed to working in an environment which does not accommodate his critique. In fact, the conversation eventually centers for a bit on our (graduate) classroom experiences, and Carlos contributes, "It's come to a point where I sort of don't want to lock myself into any specific person's rights, any specific person who teaches... I can't deal with that..." In other words, he uses the conversation to help construct further rationale for resistance.

This contribution of Carlos' triggers, for the first time, a theoretical spiel from me. It is a role I come to take on, situating discrete conversations into a larger theoretical context. By doing this, I align myself with the University, with higher education, and all the things Carlos is distancing himself from. Instead of supporting his voice, I dispute it, and try to convince him that he's wrong. In part, I am representing my beliefs (because my identity is bound up with these discourses), but in part, I am bound by my interpretation of the role of facilitator to do this. So I propose a counter rationale, a reason why a course like this one, while it doesn't offer "skills" per se, is important and useful. I claim that all teachers have theories and beliefs about teaching, and operate out of them daily. And that if you (as a teacher) can articulate and examine those beliefs,

you will make better and more informed decisions. So any course that helps you to think about your values, assumptions, and beliefs will improve your practice, whether you buy into the perspectives of the course, or not. And Carlos finds a reason why that may not be helpful.

> C: Yeah, but it's, but also, you have to be prepared for those people who set those obstacles who might not believe in what you think, as the teacher, and all of a sudden, you're head to head with someone, you know, and, where do you go? What... the issues of teaching are being lost among the teachers, trying to satisfy themselves.

In other words, he is claiming that the debates over pedagogy have come to take precedence over the actual business of teaching.

This triggers Ruth into taking on the stance I had taken earlier, although a bit more practically. She attempts to bridge the gap between the work we'll do, and Carlos' concerns. She points out that the classroom we'll be studying is in an inner-city, and that "the theoretical groundwork (we're getting) can be applied to a variety of locations that, you know, if it doesn't apply, then something's wrong with the theory and you bring that back and reevaluate it..."

Ruth, also, aligns herself with the University here. So we have two white, middle class women defending the very practices that Carlos doesn't value (in part because he does not see their relevance to poor, urban populations). And, in this environment, our position, which is more representative of both this class and the academy, carries more status and authority, and we do not validate his views.

After a brief discussion on the practicality and adaptability of our work, Carlos changes the subject. He wants to talk about the video we saw in the class (which met before the small groups, this time). He, obviously, is not as anxious to start attacking our task as other group members are. However, I would like to point out that, by Carlos' definition, he is engaging with the content of the course. This is the second time he has directly brought material and/or topics from the class into the small group conversation. The first was his use of the concept of negotiation, this focus on video is his second attempt. Very shortly after this topic switch, Ruth interrupts with, "Can I-- I'm sorry to interrupt you-- can we, I mean, (we) need to refocus. I mean, I feel like we're all getting into a lot of really different topics but," and with that it becomes my turn, as everyone else has now had theirs. Once more Carlos' proposal is not taken up.

Now I finally have a chance to share my information, although we have only a few minutes left. So I run quickly through my early teaching background, why I came to graduate school, where I am in the program and the last two jobs I've held. These, I believe, I use to claim some authority in content, to show that I have prior knowledge of second language issues and theory. I present myself as having backed into graduate work ("...I took a course or two, and then I got really fascinated by some of the questions you're asking...just realizing how much there was out there that I didn't know...), and trying to do my doctoral work out of necessity ("...because when you're in an academic position, and you haven't done that, and you come up for tenure and then they can't keep you, and

so you can't ever stay anywhere..."). This, in hindsight, seems to have been a move to align myself with them. In other words, I do have experience and knowledge that you don't have, but I'm not that smart or special, I just fell into all of this accidentally. They ask some questions (specifically Kate and Carlos), and I tell them also that I've taken language acquisition before, what the focus of my doctoral work is, and how I feel this knowledge can be used as a resource to them. I claim, again, my positioning as "authority" in the areas of language acquisition and group process.

We then switch, for the remaining few minutes, to a direct focus on task. Ruth (our organizer) says:

> R: ...This has to do with our group tasks which, I feel, we also need to focus a little bit on. Just at least give an introduction of it. But what we're going to be doing once we collect the data is analyzing different parts of the data and each, and what Jerri said is that what we can do, and we're analyzing it according to those readings that are there, which are about different parts of the data, for example the syllabus or interactions. I don't know what they are. So if we were to...

Here Ruth has taken it upon herself to look over the materials we have been given (the syllabus, group task sheet, and readings packet, which we received before this small group meeting), and organize what needed to be done. Here she displays, again, her focus on task, and organization. She is trying to explain what materials we have, and begin to talk about how we might divide up the readings. But she is ahead of the others, and they interrupt to identify the four topics, which she can't name off the top of her head. So I list

them. The group then engages in a discussion of what they're supposed to do, and how, but display confusion.

> M: ...so those are the four areas over the course of the semester that we're going to be analyzing in this classroom. There's four.
> H: The classroom... The classroom that he is in.
> M: Right. That he's gonna bring us data from.
> T: So each of us are going to have to do one separate task?
> M: Well, yeah, there's five of you and there's four areas
> R: I thought Carlos' task was to get the data so that more or less
> K: No cause we all have to act as a tutor

The group displays confusion about what needs to be done, and who needs to do it. And we're out of time. So I focus them on the packet of readings, because there's only one copy of each article, so they must be divided up somehow. But Kate wants to settle this, so she suggests a way to proceed.

> K: () building up and figuring out what tasks we're gonna want to choose for ourselves. I have a suggestion. Why don't, if there's 6 of us, oh, why don't four of us, oh, Carlos (should) not take a role, because you're going to have to read for your tutorial, right? I'll do the reading for next week. ... So it'll even out the reading, if there's only four of those, and if we did it, you wouldn't have to do it. See what I mean?

The packet of readings contains all the readings for the four areas of analysis for the entire semester, they are not for the following week. They realize this when they try to divide them, so Ruth proposes an alternate plan, which is accepted. This concludes the second meeting.

Now, after two meetings, the stage is set. Members have made preliminary claims to identities and positions within the group, and given us strong indications as to their outlooks and perspectives. They have begun to negotiate roles, course content, and meanings, and to find ways to resolve their confusions and anxieties.

As further evidence, here is a breakdown of the conversation, following the same format which I used after the first meeting.

Table 2. Characteristics of turns (2/11/92)

	Organization	Request Information	Request Clarification	Answer	New Topic	Number of Turns
Maggie	1	21	3	14	1	80
Carlos		6	1	9	4	63
Ruth	3	3		6	1	24
Kate	1	7	1	5		24
Huei Ling			1	5		11
Thanh		2	1	5		13

This chart needs to be interpreted somewhat differently from the first, because the context in which the utterances took place was different. Everyone spoke, because everyone had to introduce themselves. This turned out to be an unplanned advantage of this activity: everyone got to speak about a topic on which they held (and were granted) expertise: themselves. For this one time, everyone got to hold the floor, and everyone was acknowledged by others. This does not, however, change the pattern for the number of turns participants took. This number reflects a combination of how much each person spoke about

themselves, and how much they questioned, and reacted to, the others. In my case, I did the majority of the question-asking (as reflected by the large number of requests for information), but I had "ownership" of this event in the sense that I proposed (and forced) it. Kate made the most requests for information of the others, reinforcing my claim that she positioned herself as a learner. Carlos clearly held the floor the most, and as we have seen he covered lots of topics (as seen in part by the number of new topics introduced during a proscribed event). In fact, Ruth and I were the only other members to propose new topics. Mine was introducing the idea of doing introductions, and Ruth's was at the end, and was an organizational move, where she brought up the tasks that needed to be done for the next meeting. Only Carlos introduced topics that diverged from the conventions of introductions during that event, which can be interpreted as not understanding the conventions of these types of school-based events (thereby breaking tacit rules, which served to marginalize him), or being resistant to these conventions. In any case, the topics he proposed for discussion did not conform to the group's notion of what the event was about.

The answer column reflects, in large part, the number of questions each member was asked. For Kate, Huei Ling, and Thanh, however, all of their answers were in response to questions put to them (about their lives and experiences) during their turn, they did not claim knowledge or expertise in response to others' questions otherwise. And Ruth has the highest number of organizational moves.

In order to most effectively examine outcomes, that is to say the discourse ultimately constructed by the group, and the identities, knowledge claims, and interactions that shaped it, we will focus the remainder of the analysis on one of their topics: Learner Performance. This was the final analysis the group produced, therefore it best represents the identities and positions members came to take. Through this lens, we will see specifically how the process and content were negotiated by the group, and the language and concepts they drew on to produce it.

CHAPTER 6

SETTING THE STAGE

Ultimately, the intuitions of the group members were correct. The task, itself, did bring the group together, focus them, and serve to iron out many of the tensions and conflicts (although it did, as well, create others). The mid-portion of the semester (group meetings #3-7) was predominantly spent negotiating the tasks, specifically the procedural aspects. What the process would look like (although should was more to the point, since the assumption was that there were expectations to be met), who would take responsibility for which tasks, and what a reasonable timeline was, were the sorts of issues on the table. In order to negotiate them, the group had to find a reasonable structure within which to work, particularly in terms of the schedule, format, and interactions of the weekly meetings. They also had to begin to discuss language acquisition content, particularly concepts from the readings, in order to develop a consensus about what they were to look at, and how.

Some decisions were made by explicit negotiation, as members made concerns public, and discussed them. Others were more accidental; when something was done once, it became a pattern. Since all members were most concerned with the task itself, expediency became the single most influential factor governing decisions.

The first set of real decisions was made in the third meeting, when group members attempted to put some structure on the meetings. They decided to have a chair for each meeting, and a notetaker. These responsibilities would rotate weekly. Further, at the end of each meeting they would set an agenda for the following week, including allotting times. And the notetaker would write up minutes from the meeting, to be handed out at the beginning of the next meeting. These decisions were explicitly discussed, and agreed upon.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the packet of readings for the tasks was handed out in the second group meeting. There was no systematic way of assigning topics to people at the time, as members did not have knowledge about the topics, nor know which readings addressed which topics, and what role the readings would play in the process of analysis. So people chose articles, more-or-less randomly, although they tried to keep those on specific topics together, when they could ascertain which topics the articles addressed.

By the fifth meeting, the group had begun to discuss Blanca's classroom, largely by asking Carlos questions (i.e. how many students, structure of the day, subjects taught, materials used). When Carlos was specifically asked about her syllabus in this meeting, he said, "That syllabus, in terms of content in a course... what I'm saying now is, she doesn't have one." And when questioned further ("How about broad outlines, like, is there a place she hopes to go, or, like, what direction does she move in?"), he responds, "Ok. That I don't know."

He also doesn't, at that point, know about tests, exams, evaluations, etc. And this is the first time that one of the readings from the packet is directly represented. Kate says:

> K: Because, one of the main things when you open the article I read about syllabuses is whether the sequence, whether it advances or moves because of the learners, or because of the teacher's preplanned idea. You know, so that, the problems arise because, oh, the students are having difficulties with this, this is where we're going, or this is where they're interested in going. Or is it because of something that, in the beginning of the year, was, you know, set out, and that's what you're going to follow.

Here Kate stakes a claim to the territory of syllabus, and claims knowledge in this area based on having done the readings. Carlos responds by directly questioning her about the significance of this, thereby acknowledging her authority. Ruth intervenes, to say, "You guys, I'm wondering if we have any sort of framework to look at this now," by which she means that it may be premature to be addressing a specific topic, but Kate retains her stake in ownership of this area by responding with, "I'd like to ask Carlos a few more questions about the class." And she does.

Later in that same meeting, the articles are brought up again. This time, it is in response to a question asked by Carlos, and Ruth feels that an article she's read from the packet responds to the question. And the topic of the article was learner performance. So again, Kate represents her area (syllabus), and Ruth counters by representing hers (learner performance).

> K: The syllabus touched on tiny bits of evaluation, mainly, in the question of do students learn the method that you're teaching, like do they learn to come in, be quiet, respect authority, go numb, or do they learn the content. And it seems like the consensus in this one, there's only one syllabus article, was that they're learning by far method over content....
> R: I think that the learner performance article, just that the key that it was really related to writing, which is kind of interesting. So I don't know how the other one is, but this one said that the degree of learning through writing depends on how you're relating to the activity, and how rich the activity is, and they talk about this issue of richness...

This is the place where two patterns are set. One, each group member becomes responsible for the area in which she has readings. And two, the readings scaffold and guide the analyses, and are seen as the primary sources of "expert" information.

For the next several meetings, no specific analyses are done. At the 6th meeting, the group watches a videotape of the classroom they are analyzing. And, finally, at the 7th meeting (on March 31rst), they are ready to discuss what they saw specifically in terms of the four focus areas. Not surprisingly, Kate starts off the conversation by talking about syllabus. After a few minutes of conversation amongst Kate, Carlos, and Ruth on the topic, I interrupt with:

> M: You know what I'm thinking? I'm going to interrupt to do something that might be important. Whatever we come up with today, in terms of these ideas that Kate's taking notes on, somebody has got to write up into a draft of the paper. So maybe we better decide who's going to do that, so that person is taking notes and is prepared to, more than just the generalized meeting notes, so that that person is prepared to do it.

And Kate responds with, "Uh-huh. Well, it fits very logically. Like I would love for this one to be mine, cause I read the paper, the article on it." And this solidifies the pattern, and sets the precedent for all the topics. The person who arbitrarily received the articles initially becomes responsible for the topic on which they have read.

In a similar manner, the way in which the topics were approached, and the analyses done, became ritualized. In that 7th meeting, the group discussed how they wanted to approach the tasks. They agreed (on Ruth's suggestion) that the logical order would be to start with syllabus, then do task. In the conversation, there were lots of ideas thrown out as to what sorts of information each of these topics might include. At one point, Kate felt that the conversation needed to be refocused, so she said:

> K: Okay, so I have the syllabus combined (with) textbook, worksheet, broad concept of teacher, what Carlos does about, where this fits in, either in the past or in the future, like the sequence of the lessons.

These are the concepts relevant to her topic that Kate has honed from the conversation thus far. But it marks a clear shift into the discussion of that topic alone, and signals that the group is about to seriously attack this first task. Ruth replies with, "Maybe we can just brainstorm on anything any of us knows about the..." But they're not sure exactly how to proceed. So I say:

> M: ...has she written anything, is there anything written about what she means by that, is there an explanatory paragraph in there to frame it before we do that?

By "she", I am referring to Jerri, "in there" refers to the initial handout on group projects (appendix B). In effect, I am trying to provide guidelines for the discussion (and analysis) by deferring to Jerri as the authority, and the written text as representing her. Ruth locates and reads the paragraph, which defines syllabus, and specifically defines the task the group is to do. The paragraph ends with a direct referral to one of the articles from the packet ("Breen's article on syllabus design will give you a good foundation for the range of syllabi that have been traditionally used in ESL and give you the theoretical assumptions...") which Kate has already read and summarized orally for the group. This, then, serves two functions, it further contributes to the position of the readings as authoritative, and it solidifies Kate's position as representative of "expertise" in this area, because she has the best command of the information in the article.

So the convention within the group becomes that the process for approaching each task is to first read Jerri's written guidelines, then apply the information in the articles she gave out to the practice in Blanca's classroom. This simplified the tasks immensely, and made group members more secure, as they at least felt that they had some understanding of the expectations and procedures. It helped the group to locate the expertise and authority they were looking for. It also helped to negotiate power and status relations within the group, as the person who had done the reading held the authority for that topic,

and that position rotated as the topics did. There was one exception to this last claim: Thanh was not ultimately granted authority and status in her topic, as she was eventually perceived as unable to perform the requisite tasks.

Now we've seen how basic structural and procedural designs were negotiated, and how the group came to operate. In order to further explore and explicate the discourse the group constructed, and the "learning" that occurred, we will turn to the last analysis that they did, which was learner performance. Because it was the final task, it offers the best view of the rituals and patterns the group came to enact, and the ways the group came to work together. By looking closely at the process and interactions around this one topic, we can see within which positions and roles group members acted, what influenced and shaped the discussions, where ideas and information came from, which were taken up (and which weren't), how they were applied to practice, and how individuals gave to and took from the interactions.

Structure and Dynamics of the Analysis

Learner performance was first addressed as a topic in the 8th group meeting. Although the topic focused on in that meeting was task, at the end of the session I (doing my usual organization) asked the group if they had any questions on task that they wanted Carlos to ask Blanca. This was typical, at the end of each session we usually had questions about the classroom that had surfaced during the discussion, and Carlos would ask Blanca during the week,

and bring the answers back to us at the next meeting. This time, before we could focus on the questions that had arisen in the task discussion, Ruth jumped in with:

> R: One thing I wanted to ask you was to try a writing sample for this group as an example of learner performance, which we're going to have to do.

This is an abrupt transition, the group had been talking about task, and I had asked them to think back on the conversation to recall any unanswered questions. But Ruth was already focused on learner performance, and had taken ownership of that topic. The conversation continued:

> C: A writing sample from any student?
> R: From any student.
> M: More than one student. Would a couple be more helpful than one?
> R: Probably. At least that way we'd have more flexibility. Get anything you can.
> M: Just anything (at all)?
> R: Paper or whatever.

Here is strong evidence of Ruth's control of this topic. It will be two weeks before we start discussing it, but she is already thinking and planning the analysis. In Jerri's Guidelines for Analyses, she specifically instructs, "I would like you to collect writing performance for this analysis." So Ruth has already read the guidelines, and begun the planning. And she gives Carlos his orders, and makes the decisions. Carlos asks her, " A writing sample from any student?", and she answers, "From any student." And when I suggest that more

than one might be helpful, I am only offering it as a suggestion to Ruth, and she makes the decision. I also defer to her as the authority.

Now, it is a reasonable thing for Ruth to assume that this topic "belongs" to her, that has already been agreed upon. But the convention thus far has been that the person who read the articles for the topic summarizes the articles for the group, then the group decides how to go about the analysis together. In this case, Ruth has prepared earlier by reading the guidelines ahead of time, but the most unusual thing is that the decision about writing samples (what sort, how many) was not made collaboratively by the group. This particular dynamic intensifies the following week, as Ruth controls the meeting, the topic, and the decisions. It should be noted that this is, in part, because Ruth has developed the strongest leadership position in the group already. The others look up to her as smart, organized, knowledgeable (about academic and schooling issues), and efficient, all categories highly valued in by this group. In my field notes from this period, I report on a conversation I had with Kate:

> She (Kate) admires Ruth tremendously, both her focus and insights, and her manner and way of handling everyone. Said she's always patient.

From this time also, in my field notes, I report on a conversation with Huei Ling, "She praised Ruth, and said that she likes working with her, she's so good, and focused, and keeps it together." This is praise from the two group members (other than me) who are most closely aligned with academic norms and values,

and the praise directly reflects these values. It's the skills perceived as necessary for doing school-based tasks that command respect.

Ruth had clearly taken the major responsibility for organizational tasks, and often focused the group. And she held the position as authority on groupwork and collaborative tasks, having had multiple courses with Jerri. She was already far along in the ESL program, and was situated in ESL classes in a public school, so, as far as the group was concerned, she had all the bases covered. She also, as Kate noted, had excellent interpersonal skills, and everyone felt valued by her. So when she took such a strong role on this topic, there was no public reaction, everyone immediately accepted her claim and method.

Carlos never quite managed to "go with the flow" (to the annoyance of his groupmates). It appeared to group members that he would wait each week until the group had just begun the discussion of their first topic (remember, there was an agenda), then introduce something that was on his mind, and sidetrack the conversation. Again, from my field notes, here is an excerpt about a conversation I had with Kate:

> She wanted to know about Carlos' focus, he would chime in with irrelevant things, said she's noticed it's a pattern. ...She feels he says what he wants when he wants, regardless of the group's agenda, or the flow of what's going on.

In this 8th meeting, here's an example of how this happened:

> M: ...That's about where we were, on the agenda for today...
> C: I was going to see, uh, I have to give this, do I have to give this, this is task?

The topic for this meeting is task. Carlos has brought in a writing sample from Blanca's class, at Ruth's request, and seems not to realize that the sample is for learner performance, not task. So Ruth responds.

> R: That's performance.
> C: Who's doing that?
> R: I, well...
> M: We all have to do it.
> R: We all have to, but, I mean, we needed something but this isn't enough.
> C: Okay, how much more?

Here Carlos has effectively sidelined the conversation to a different topic, where it remains for literally half the meeting. There has been extensive conversation in multiple meetings on learner performance, and Ruth has been “in control” each time. So Carlos should have known that Ruth's "doing" this topic. Certainly she’s been the one who’s asked Carlos for the writing samples. Because Carlos didn’t have a topic that he was primarily responsible for, and his contributions to the conversations had only been about practical classroom matters, I respond to his question, "Who's doing that?" with, "We all have to do it," trying to get across the message that he has a role to play in the analyses. But Ruth feels responsibility for this topic, and Carlos has not produced what he

said he would, he's brought in one paper. This has happened before. Carlos has multiple times written down specific information that the group wants from Blanca and/or her students for their next meeting, then failed to produce it. So Ruth confronts him, and he seems confused, but willing. Ruth goes through it again, this time even more specifically than last. She makes a very detailed proposal for what the group should look at, without negotiating it with other group members beforehand. This, in part, is forced by her frustration with Carlos (although many group members share this frustration, as evinced in the conversations which I noted in my journal, as well as multiple instances of displayed frustration and impatience in meetings).

She takes this opportunity to pass out a handout she has prepared and brought with her, entitled Guidelines for Analysis of Learner Performance (Appendix C). This is a detailed set of questions, which she culled from various sources, to scaffold the group's discussion. We will look in detail later at these questions, as they structure the discussion, and therefore the group's sense-making, of this topic. Here's what she says now:

> R: Yeah, we said a couple of things last week. Actually maybe I should give these to everybody because we're not going to be able to do performance today, but what I did, was I made up guidelines for analyzing performance that I figured everybody could look over, because we're all gonna (have) to do it so... (W)hen we get for example, number 3, is on the type of performance, I was wondering, if I said that clearly last week, that we need either, one person with different tasks across time, different people with the same tasks at the same time, or one person with different tasks at the same time. So in addition to this, if you could get, like a couple of other students on the same assignment, that would be ideal.

Ruth makes the point that we addressed this issue last week, but makes sure that she spells it out, none the less. And she uses her guidelines to document the need for this. Number three, which she refers to, says:

> Types of comparisons we can use:
> -one person with different tasks across time
> -different people with the same task at the same time
> -one person with different tasks at the same time

She has used this both as rationale, and as a reference point for Carlos, should he not understand or remember. But Carlos asks for clarification.

> C: So which one am I concentrating on? One person- different people?
> R: Well, whatever is easiest, to get the information out of. I mean, whatever she can give you. If not, I have plenty of stuff.

By this last sentence, Ruth is referring to an earlier offer she made to bring in materials from the class she is working in, and is signaling her mistrust that Carlos can fulfill his mandate. Notable in this entire interchange, though, is the control Ruth has taken. She has written the guidelines, and therefore controlled the content and form of the analysis, she has given direct instructions to Carlos, and signaled her frustration at his misbehavior. She has also shown her willingness (and implied her ability) to relieve him of his duties, and take them on herself.

I, meanwhile, have been reading the guidelines, and have an additional concern. The group has already established a pattern whereby questions about Blanca's practice arise in conversation, and Carlos has the responsibility to ask Blanca the questions, then report back to the group. From group members' points of view, this was not done in a "timely" manner. Further, members of the group found the answers that Carlos got from Blanca "too brief" and "uninformative". Even before this pattern had developed, earlier in the semester, Carlos would answer questions the group had on his own, and seem to speak authoritatively as representing the classroom and Blanca. The group wanted Blanca's voice, but what they believed themselves to be getting was Carlos' voice. He would answer all the questions, but the answers seemed to the group to come out of his beliefs and opinions, or his perception of the classroom practice . As things progressed, the group eventually insisted that Carlos directly question Blanca, although he represented her as somewhat uncomfortable about having her classroom studied.

It is clear here that these matters are deeply "culturally loaded." What is "timely" and "informative," what it means to represent or question another, what it means to mediate between a "real world" site (with a minority teacher and minority students) and a university classroom are quite likely to differ among people from different social and cultural groups, with different political and educational interests and viewpoints. Once again, Carlos' offerings and manner of participation were devalued. At the same time, the meanings he gave to

"timeliness," "informativeness," questioning, mediating, and such, were never overtly explored-- and certainly his view that the teacher was reluctant to be "studied" should have motivated such exploration, even aside from the importance of such exploration in multicultural groups made up of people positioned quite differently in regard to "mainstream" sources of power and status within the university. However, rather than engaging in such an exploration, the group simply assumed that when his meanings appeared to differ from ours, his were deficient or due to a lack of cooperation. We assumed as well that our meanings were transparently "right" and socioculturally and socioplitically "neutral." Of course, many of us "knew better" theoretically, but under the press of interactional and institutional forces did not act on this knowledge.

To get at this issue more deeply, consider an earlier example from Carlos reporting back to the group on the questions that came from the syllabus conversation. In this case, he had written down the questions the group posed.

> C: The first question was, "How do you decide to move on to the next lesson?" Answer: "If there are no questions, I go on."... Ok, "How do you present vocabulary?" "I do not, just structure."
> M: Structure? Like nouns, verbs, grammatical structure, I assume?
> C: I assume. I assume. ... "how do you sequence your lesson plans?" "I follow the book."
> M: And how does, I wonder how the book does it?
> C: I'll show you the book.

To the group these seemed to be "just bare facts" with no elaboration or explanation. Since this was a meeting on learner performance, and as I looked over Ruth's guideline questions, all of which called for much more information on the classroom, I got concerned. So I confronted Carlos:

> M: Ok. Let me ask this, Carlos. In order, I just read this. ... I'll be blunt about this: It is my sense... that you probably cannot get from Blanca the kind of information that we would need to answer an awful lot of these questions. I haven't figured out yet if that's because she doesn't have that information or because she's not giving it to you... and I'm willing to talk about it, but, I mean, if you look at issues of teacher-student perspectives and relations, I mean these are much more complicated questions than the very simple ones that you've asked her before and you get one syllable answers from her. And if she's not going to be able to really, I mean, if it was your class, you could tell us. But you can't tell us. Blanca has to. And Blanca doesn't seem willing to really get into that and do all that.

I've put the blame squarely on Blanca, with little or no consideration for what "counts" as an adequate answer to her, nor any consideration for how Carlos may view his role as "representing" ("re-presenting") Blanca and mediating between her and our group. Further, though I appear to place the "inadequacy" in the teacher, Blanca, in the context of this interaction, my contribution can also be heard as an indirect way to accuse Carlos of failing to "extract" the "right" information from the teacher (and, note, this is a teacher that he has already said is reluctant to be "studied").

Carlos quickly defends Blanca, a stance he's taken before.

> C: Let me just, no, I don't know. I can't really say that, because she's been helpful up 'til this point, so, let me just ask her. Are these the questions that I ask, that I have to ask....

Carlos holds on to his position, although claiming that "she's been helpful up 'til now" is not entirely a judgment the group accepts. Carlos then asks whether the questions on Ruth's sheet are the ones he should ask. Ruth and I, at least, take this to indicate that he does not understand the difference between "guideline questions" and "interview questions," a distinction that we assume to be "transparent" and "apolitical," though Carlos may make neither assumption (e.g., failing to indicate the underlying guidelines in one's questions may be taken as a way to hide underlying assumptions, and their theoretical "home base," from the interviewee). Here is a sample of those questions:

> Issues of teacher/student perspectives and relations:
> -how does the learner define the situation?
> -how does the teacher define the situation?
> -how does the teacher communicate her expectations?
> -how is the meaning of the performance negotiated?
> -what are the learner's (teacher's) assumptions about performance?

These questions are meant as guidelines for the group members' conversation, they assume some knowledge of specific concepts and language from this course, and interrelate with previous conversations. Carlos is not intended to pose them directly to Blanca. She could not contextualize them in

our classroom discussions, and therefore know how to interpret them. While Carlos seems to us (at least, Ruth and I) not understand the distinction, and seems to us not to know what to ask, given his critique of the 'irrelevance" of academic theories to "real world" multicultural settings, which we have seen before, and his role as "representing" a fellow minority teacher, it is clear that this distinction is more "loaded" than we had assumed "on line." The "guidelines" represent the privileged knowledge and theoretical perspectives of the class and the university. Blanca will not get to hear them, nor be allowed to participate in them (or judge them, something that Carlos, in fact, already has). But her answers-- which must be "fully elaborated"-- will be judged by them. It is at least as reasonable to see this as a dilemma that Carlos must deal with as it is to attribute a "lack" of understanding to him. And, indeed, there may be some "understandings" that Carlos does not want to have, or that, at least, stand in tension with his other viewpoints and the relationship which he holds with the teacher.

Ruth, once again, undertakes the task of informing Carlos, in this case about the distinction between "guideline questions" and "interview questions:"

R: No.
C: .... these aren't questions? What are?
M: No, these are for us.
C: These are for us. Okay.
R: What we're supposed to do is to get learner performance and know the context that it's used in the class
C: Okay.
R: and then analyze it according to that knowledge.
C: Okay.

> R: So you have to know something about how she deals with performance in the classroom, what she thinks about it, just how you've seen her analyze this, how does she evaluate students in general, and which, a framework like that, will have something specific hopefully, some sort of performance from different students that we can analyze.

Up until now, Ruth has dominated the conversation. Here, once again, she has laid out a framework for analysis, as well as requesting specific sorts of materials, without input from other group members. I add that we also need information on the kids themselves, "...cause you can't analyze their performance if you don't know who they are and what their levels are, and where they're coming from and how they see the task." And then I ask Carlos if he understands, and is comfortable with his task. And he says, "Learner performance. I just have to go up to her and just say give me the class for a minute, and I'm going to talk to them, and ask them. That's how I'm going to get my material from them." I ask, "What are you going to ask them?", and he replies, "What do you want me to ask them? You want to get to know these kids, what does that mean?"

Ruth's claim that the guideline questions are "for us" implies the very separation between "us" and our "informant," whose responses Carlos is merely supposed to "transmit," that on reflection is so politically loaded. Furthermore, Ruth uses terms like "learner performance" from a perspective fully embedded in the ideologies of this class, with no acknowledgment that Blanca, and, indeed, Carlos, too, may view "learner performance," and related aspects of teaching

and learning, differently. They may also view "elaborating" their viewpoints on such matters as "risky" in this situation, as well. Finally, while we take Carlos' question "You want to know these kids, what does that mean?" as another sign of either a lack of understanding or a lack of cooperation, in terms of the reflective analysis I am developing here, it is all too meaningful. What, indeed, does it mean to ask a minority teacher/graduate student, one who has a critique of the university world, to "transmit" information from a fellow minority teacher, based on questions whose "guidelines" are inaccessible to the teacher and, perhaps, less than fully meaningful and politically valued by the "transmitter," who, in any case, sees his role as "representative" in ways that were both misunderstood by and badly in need of being explored by us?

Carlos (and Thanh, as well) seemed to some of us unable to speak, conceptualize, and behave in the "right ways," ways which have admittedly come to be privileged in settings like the one being studied here. The group seems willing to engage with Carlos, and accept his position as liaison, but the forces of "on line" interaction, the focus on task, as well as the power dynamics present prevent any explicit focus on process or political issues. Thus, the group does not confront the dynamics at work in ways that might lead to more equitable positions and greater understandings. It should be said here, too, that the sorts of understandings that I am trying to achieve by reflection on interaction "after the fact" must come to be built in as "reflection in action" within such interactions. We need to imagine structures and processes that will facilitate this and lessen

the power of task demands and social interactional dynamics to carry out the workings of power and status in tacit, but all too real, ways.

This is an extended example of some of the overarching dynamics of the group in general, and this task in particular. Carlos seems willing, but his understandings are not in sync with the rest of the group. He denies the group the data that they feel would inform their analyses. They, of course, deny him the voice that would enable him to make important contributions. Ruth is on task and in control, and tries to manage and coerce the group to move and produce. Thanh is silent; Kate is absent from this particular meeting. And Huei Ling contributes primarily to the analyses themselves, not the organizational or process talk around them. I try to focus people, explicate, add ideas.

In this case, I now (upon questioning from Carlos), try to expand upon the sort of information I think it would be helpful to have from the students. This includes: Literacy in their first language; previous level of education; socioeconomic level; parental expectations; etc. But Ruth disagrees, "Really? Cause I wasn't thinking stuff like that....I think getting into stuff like that would really bog us down." Ruth wants only the classroom context, she wants to keep things as simple as possible. She and I debate, nobody else contributes to this negotiation. And the pattern has been set, it's Ruth's analysis, and the decision is hers.

As soon as I defer, Carlos reopens the original conversation, with, "Now, I'm going to try one person. One person, different tasks has to, well, let's see,

which one of these? You have three types of comparisons we can use." And the conversation goes on. Ruth patiently addresses this issue, again, to which Carlos responds, "So that these questions can be asked to the teacher and/or the student?" And this triggers Ruth to go into a longer explanation of exactly what she had in mind, trying to clarify for him the difference between guideline questions and those that he should ask Blanca and the students. Here, his "pushing" for understanding actually leads to Ruth making a concrete connection between theory and practice.

> R: Um, see, what I had in mind when I was asking these questions, I guess, was I just got these from the article and from putting together stuff from all the articles a little bit. And I just had in mind like if, I guess you could ask this explicitly. When I was thinking of it, I was thinking, what could we infer from information.... I was thinking maybe you know what Blanca thought about evaluation and how she sees the control of the situation, and how she, I guess it would have to be through her eyes then unless you ask the students how they perceive their role when they're evaluated. Like do they feel like they have a say whether it's fair or not, like things, like one thing struck me last week, when I was giving a quiz to my class. I told them, the next day, before the quiz I crossed off two questions because I said we didn't go over them in the reviews so it wasn't fair for me to ask them. And they were shocked that I considered that something wasn't fair that I was going to ask them. They just, they said, but why aren't you asking us those questions? And I said, well, we didn't go over those vocabulary words so I can't quiz you on them. That was just beyond their comprehension. And then the next day I said, I handed them back the quiz and I said, do you feel like this was fair? Was it a fair test of your knowledge? And they just didn't know how to respond. So it's just that they felt, you know, what the students' perspective toward their control of their own evaluations, that kind of thing. That really stuck out for me.

This passage is notable for several reasons. It is the only place where Ruth explicitly states how she formulated her guidelines, and therefore her perspectives on this topic. And it is the first time she speaks from her position as teacher. This is powerful for the group, her narratives of real life classroom examples seem to often help make sense of a theoretical or abstract conversation, by grounding it to a specific example to which they can relate. And, indeed, at this point Carlos stops asking questions, and seems to have finally made sense of his task. And he says, "So, as far as I'm concerned, I'm gonna get several different students, I'll get several students, and then I'm going to ask them for as much material as they have. Okay?" Here, at last, he's clear on what he has to do, although the "Okay?" is interesting, because he's still deferring to authority, and checking for approval. He has assumed a position subordinate to Ruth.

I suggest that perhaps which of the three categories (types of comparisons) we choose to use may have to come from what materials we can get, rather than the other way around, and here Huei Ling makes a contribution, her first in the conversation, other than echoing someone else's words. She does not contribute to the conversation with Carlos, or help clarify his role, nor does she negotiate the guidelines or set up that Ruth has proposed. She contributes directly to the practical decision about what information should inform the analysis. And she suggests that Carlos try to collect material from the same time period as the video we observed. This is an excellent suggestion,

as the video will enable the group to better visualize and contextualize the materials we receive. And it is taken up immediately, and enthusiastically. And this is, ultimately, what Carlos provides.

This scenario exemplifies earlier claims. Ruth has assumed a position of authority, both because this is "her" topic, and because this has been negotiated within the group. It is my claim that, of all group members, Ruth is most closely aligned with the sorts of attitudes and behaviors that represent academic discourse, and which the majority of group members believe "count" most here. Carlos has been marginalized, and constructed as resistant and disruptive. The knowledge, experiences, and attributes he possesses are not valued here. Huei Ling has been granted a position that represents her interests, because those, also, are valued in this environment. And Thanh, at least for now, is silent. And now, also, we begin to see how the discourse the group constructed, and the meanings they came to make, are shaped by these constructed identities.

As further evidence of these positions, I have once again counted turns, and categorized just a few of the functions speech served.

Table 3. Characteristics of turns (4/7/92)

	Request Information	Answer Requests	Number of Turns
Maggie	12	5	47
Carlos	21	5	59
Ruth	2	21	56
Huei Ling	0	6	11
Thanh	0	0	0

Once more, in the context of this particular conversation (focused entirely on what data the group needs to conduct their analysis), this table supports the sorts of claims I've made. Carlos takes the most turns, requesting information (and clarification) on what he's supposed to do. Ruth has the next largest number, with the majority of answers for others' questions. My turns of requesting information largely consist of interactions with Carlos, where I question him as to his ability to get the information we need from Blanca, and check his understanding of what he needs to do, and interactions with Ruth, where I push her to think through what she wants to do, and what she needs to do it (i.e. "How are you going to get at what the student thinks?", and "...related to the video?"). And Huei Ling's contributions all come at the end, as the group discusses what specific materials Carlos is to bring in the following week. This is where she voices her preference for an exercise, or test, that relates to the time period of the video we've seen. Others question her, to make sure they've understood what she wants ("From that period beyond, or up to that period?" "Yeah, around that period"). And Thanh says nothing for the entire meeting.

Analysis of Guidelines

It is now necessary to look in depth at the guidelines that Ruth provided. The other group members have not read the article on learner performance, and Ruth has not summarized it, except in representing some of the concepts

through the guidelines. There is much overlap in all four topics the group is to produce analyses on, as they come to discover. But the group has not overtly applied these concepts to this topic. So these guidelines provide the only introduction they have to the vocabulary and concepts relevant to the topic, and suggest ways to integrate and apply both existing and new information. In this way they (the guidelines) organize and construct the way the group takes meaning from this topic, as well as scaffolding the analysis itself. And in this way both Ruth and the guidelines she has provided are acting as mediators, or mediational tools.

If this is the representation of learner performance that the group members have, where did the information and concepts come from? What are the sources of expertise, whose ideas and language is Ruth representing? Here is a concrete case where we can see what input Ruth has had, how she's made sense of it, how she's represented it, and what sense the group comes to make from this. We can not only locate the sources Ruth has used in constructing these guidelines, we can specifically pinpoint ideas and information that she's been exposed to, and chosen (consciously or unconsciously) not to use.

The majority of the questions Ruth has posed come fairly directly from theoretical concepts and ideas from the readings and Jerri's guidelines (as in her earlier mention of "richness"). Unfortunately, Ruth has taken these out of context and listed them, without a discussion of the articles or context in which the author presents them. The first three areas presented in Ruth's guidelines

come, in their entirety, from Jerri's guidelines. Jerri says, "What counts as writing, performance, or product is up to you." Ruth asks, "What kind of performance is this?" Jerri says, "I would like the group to focus on what the learners are able to do, rather than what they cannot do..." Ruth says, "Try to focus on what this sample shows us that the learner can do." Jerri says, "...you should then ask comparative questions. How does a learner's performance in this task differ from that task and why?" Ruth asks, "Comparative questions to consider: -how are the performances different/similar? -why do you think they are different/similar?" The same is true for the three types of comparisons Ruth has proposed, Jerri explicitly names them.

When we get to number four, Ruth begins to incorporate some information from her reading. The heading is: Issues of context. The first few subquestions, again, come directly from Jerri's passage. But the fifth question, "is the performance... multisource? continual/periodic? authentic? (authentic to what context?)" comes from an article entitled, "The multisource nature of learning: an introduction (Iran-Nejad, McKeachie & Berliner, 1990), and "Active and dynamic self-regulation of learning processes" (Iran-Nejad, 1990), as does another question, "what is the "richness" of the context within which the performance takes place?" (although this is the second time Ruth has encountered the concept of richness in readings). Here, by the way these questions are worded, group members are introduced both to key concepts, and field-specific language, as Ruth represents what she has taken from these

articles (one is primarily an extension of the other). In order to answer these questions, group members would have to negotiate terms like "multisource", "authentic", and "richness" in order to have a mutual understanding of what it is that they are discussing. Ruth has, in fact, already proposed the term "richness" in the fourth meeting, when she introduces the learner performance article for the first time. She said:

> R: I think that the learner performance article, just that the key was that it was really related to writing, which is kind of interesting. ...this one said that the degree of learning through writing depends on how you're relating to the activity, and how rich the activity is, and they talk about this issue of richness, and it's a really subjective kind of term, but, basically it's, the richness is the degree to which you're incorporating different skills, so you're not just practicing one thing, and you're not just doing something 'cause it's interesting, but you're incorporating lots of different things. So that might have something to do with this idea.

At this time (3/3), she has already read the article, and been struck by this concept. And she finds it applicable to the task of the group. But there is no uptake. In fact, the next comment, by Carlos, is, "What was the next step in this, in our organization?" Which means, let's go on to the next item on our agenda. Ruth has not yet claimed the area of learner performance, nor have the rituals of using the readings been set up yet, so she has no authority here, and is not heard. And this term does not resurface until it appears on these guidelines. But this time, Ruth has the position, and the authority, to propose it, and have it negotiated.

Interestingly, all the questions/concepts/terminologies that come from the readings come from specific readings Ruth has done either for learner performance or her turn at the tutorials. None of these questions represent information from articles required for the large group meetings, or articles other group members have read and represented for their topics, or from their tutorials. This would suggest that having the primary responsibility for interpreting and representing the articles to the group produces a deeper engagement with, and understanding of, the articles. And certainly the in-depth discussion of the articles at the tutorial (facilitated by Jerri), would produce this. Not only is the student's understanding and interpretation validated by Jerri at the tutorials, but the engagement (and understanding) will be viewed (and evaluated) by her.

Consider another of Ruth's guideline questions, "-what is the relationship between form and content?" This is from an article she read for a tutorial, entitled, "Learning Strategies: Models and Materials" (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). After the tutorial, Ruth (as was customary) wrote up notes for the group on the articles and discussion. In the section on this article, she wrote, "I like the practicality of this article... It really illustrated the symbiotic relationship of method and content...". Here she answers her own question.

The fifth (and last) section of Ruth's guidelines are focused on "Issues of teacher/student perspectives and relations." Again, five of the nine questions

come from Jerri's text. And the others come from articles she's read, and been responsible for.

But Ruth has chosen discrete concepts from the readings, things that she responded to in reading and conversation, and missed many of the key ideas represented. These ideas, therefore, never get represented to the group, as they never read these articles. They are, of course, free to if they choose, but they have plenty of their own articles to be responsible for, and there is no indication that they do.

Let's look at one striking example of a crucial aspect of learner performance that does not get incorporated. We've looked in depth at the 10th meeting, where the topic of learner performance was discussed, and decisions made on what sorts of information and materials the group would need to perform the analysis. I proposed:

> M: We also, to analyze learner performance, there's a lot of information that we're going to need about the learners themselves. Cause you can't analyze their performance if you don't know who they are and what their levels are, and where they're coming from and how they see the task.

And when Carlos specifically asks what information we need to know, I say:

> M: I think we need to know-- we know what level they're at, in terms of that they're beginning learners. We don't know, for example, are they literate in their first language, are they, what's their educational level before, where ever they came from, what kind of homes are they from, what's the socioeconomic level, what are the parents' expectations, do

> they want their kids to go to college? Is it absolutely expected by the community and parents that these kids are going to drop out?

I'm brainstorming questions that will inform the group of the context of the performance. At this point, Ruth interrupts to say, "Really? Cause I wasn't thinking stuff like that....especially for this analysis, I think stuff like that would bog us down." She wants the analysis confined to the classroom, the context questions should address the classroom context only. After this meeting, Ruth prepares the guidelines for the following week, and the context questions are directly related to the classroom context only.

Now we'll look at the readings, the same readings that Ruth has culled some of her questions from. We will see that all of them address the broader context, and stress that it is a crucial factor in assessing learner performance.

From Iran-Nejad's (1990) "The Multisource Nature of Learning: An Introduction", and "Active and Dynamic Self-regulation of Learning Processes", Ruth took a number of her concepts (and words). The notion of multisource performance comes from these (of course), as do those of authenticity, richness, and resources. But both of these articles talk about context. In the former, Iran-Nejad states:

> This research indicates that the more meaningful, the more deeply or elaboratively processed, the more situated in context, and the more rooted in cultural, background, metacognitive, and personal knowledge an event is, the more readily it is understood, learned, and remembered.

The latter says:

> Learning is no longer viewed as incremental internalization. Rather, it is defined as reconceptualization of internal (previously learned) knowledge.

Both of these statements point to the cultural, personal, and background knowledge of learners as crucial to the learning process. But Ruth does not take up these concepts.

From Bereiter (1985), Ruth takes several concepts, notably her final question, "-how much guidance and feedback is there from the teacher?" The article addresses "the paradox" between constructivist theories of learning and the process of internalization. In it, Bereiter states:

> The two commonly recognized forms of instructional effort may be roughly characterized as specific teaching, in which there is fairly direct demonstration, explanation, coaching, or practice of the things to be learned, and nonspecific teaching, which deals with the host of attitudinal, situational, personal, and cultural factors that affect learning. Both of these forms of teaching are, of course, relevant to the learning of more complex structures.

Here, and throughout the article, he also points to factors from the learners' backgrounds as profoundly influencing learning. In fact, virtually all the articles do, some more explicitly, some less. But Ruth not only doesn't include these catagories in her outline, she directly states that she does not want them considered, she wants the data and analysis limited to the classroom context.

There are numerous other examples of information and ideas from the readings that are not taken up. And, of course, they could not all be. But in this case, it is not the group's negotiation that decides what's relevant and what isn't, the group never gets exposed to the parts that Ruth, for whatever reason, doesn't represent. They never get initial exposure. So their understandings of this topic, which come from applying the concepts they've been presented with to this classroom practice, are filtered through Ruth's original understanding. And her public representations of that understanding have already gone through her decision-making process of what's most important and relevant. Given the theories she's representing, this is not a "context-rich environment" for learning about learner performance. The conceptual framework offered to group members is severely limited, as are opportunities for exposure to the "expert" theories group members privilege.

Still, they have received a framework within which they can perform their task. And for some of them, performing the task "adequately" (by Jerri's standards, of course) is their primary goal. To all of them, it is important. And this enables them to get on with the analysis, and immerse themselves immediately in the concrete conversations necessary to do this.

So let's see how the conversation goes, how the dynamics, rituals, and information come together, and result in the construction of the analysis itself.

CHAPTER 7

TASK AS TOOL: CONSTRUCTING AN EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE

Data and Access

The 11th group meeting was scheduled to be the performance of the actual analysis of learner performance. It began, as had become customary, with Carlos bringing his issues and interests to the forefront at the start of the meeting. But this time this was appropriate, and the group was interested, as he had brought in samples of student work for analysis. He had notebooks from two students, and homework worksheets from five others. He explains how these particular two notebooks were selected:

> C: ...I didn't want to bring you 45 notebooks. I thought that was ridiculous. So I picked out, I asked Blanca to tell me which of the students does their work and has notebooks neat, presentable in some way, and I didn't want just all the Hispanics, I didn't want just all the Asians, I think I got a cross-cultural representation of notebooks here.

This marks the second time in the semester that Carlos took full responsibility for carrying out the task the group had given him (the first was done in this same week, he transcribed a small portion of the videotape). And he did bring data, as requested. However, given what we knew about the students in the class, asking for notebooks that were "neat" and "presentable" probably ensured that we didn't get an accurate representation of the typical

student. However, the task called for an analysis of performance, it didn't specify that it be typical. And Carlos did not specify how he got the worksheets.

The group had to decide how to approach the data. In order to facilitate this, I asked Carlos about the nature of the entries in the notebooks. He replied, "...basically (it's) going along with how she teaches in terms of repetition... practice exercises, homework exercises, writing exercises." I ask about free writing, or essays, and he replies, "Sentences," then elaborates, "I don't think she veers off too much from the book. So that if the book has questions, they might have to answer them." So our range of data is limited, also, to drill responses. We are analyzing drill responses from neat, organized students. Here is another place where the richness of the task, and the meaning the group can derive from it, are bounded by the access they are given (or denied) to the original and authentic information.

Ruth immediately proceeds to process issues, and makes a concrete proposal to analyze different people with one task at the same time, and adds, "I think the key issue for this analysis is the context." Here she is referring to classroom context, she never again alludes to, or includes, a larger cultural context. Carlos has the next turn, but it's not related to this ("Oh, I found something here that might be free writing..."). He's focused on his own performance, on feeling that he's adequately responded to questions within the domain over which he has taken control, i.e. the materials from the classroom. In this meeting, he does not contribute to other aspects of the conversation. In

fact, nobody responds, so Ruth continues to explore that idea out loud (and alone), and comes to suggest (echoing Huei Ling, from the preceding week) that the group should find examples of performance from the same time period as the video. Here is the uptake on Huei Ling's idea, it was her sole contribution during that meeting, but it shaped and focused the entire analysis.

For the next few minutes, the group is actively engaged in examining the notebooks and worksheets; it is Ruth who finally locates a drill that matches the video. The vocabulary and grammatical structures are identical. But all group members are engaged in the task, except for Thanh, who is not present. And eventually they come to find three entries that both students have done which relate to the video, and they decide to do the analysis based on them. But they cannot proceed with the actual analysis, because there's only one copy of each sample, so group members can't all be considering the documents simultaneously. So they decide that Carlos will xerox the pieces they've chosen, and they'll do the actual analysis the following week.

Despite this, they do continue to look at the writing, and discuss it. Ruth, of course, takes the lead, after the decision to table the conversation has been made. She is still preoccupied with the notebooks, and asks Carlos about the directions the students receive from Blanca. And she comments on something she's noticed: one of the entries calls for the students to include their opinion in an answer, and relate the question to themselves. This is novel, and noteworthy. It is also the first point that's been raised for analysis. However, it

is not taken up by the group. After a brief response by Kate and me, Ruth again addresses the form of the analysis, makes sure we're agreed on it, and that we'll have the copies the next week.

At this point, I focus on organization, and ask Carlos whether he has asked Blanca the questions we gave him the preceding week. The group needs the answers to contextualize their analysis. He replies, "I don't know. That's something that I had that sheet that Ruth had gave me, and I dropped all my papers." Carlos has not asked Blanca the questions. So Ruth and I reiterate the conversation. She concludes by saying:

> R: ... yeah, and then I asked you what your impression was of how the kids perceive what this performance means. I mean, when the kids write in their notebook, are they writing because they're going to get graded on their notebook, or are they writing, because they like writing in notebooks, like, what's their point of view of this performance? That would be a good thing for you to find out. Like how, you know, what the kid, and actually, a good indication is that they want their notebooks back ...

And Carlos provides answers. He speaks from a position of representing the students, his authority comes from being (and having been) a minority student himself. This is not the only occasion where he represents what's inside the students' heads, and the group initially appears to take up his interpretations. He says:

> C: Well it was very difficult to get volunteers to give me their notebooks. So if they feel that their notebook is the only connection between them and what's going on in the class... It's three things-- it's their writing, it's their understanding, and it's their notes.

Carlos represents the meaning the notebooks have for the students. The proof that he offers for his theory is that the students didn't want to give him their notes. There are many alternative hypotheses available, possibly (for example) they were ashamed of their language, and/or their work. But he makes this claim, then continues:

> C: ...It's their example for their writing. And it's their proof that they've done something in class where they're kind of... I don't know if any of you know that, when your parents say, "open that book, tell me what you did today," you know.

Here Carlos explicitly draws on his ethnic (and/or class) background. By saying, "I don't know if any of you know that," he is referring to the fact that he comes from the same background as these kids, and therefore shares the same experiences. It is important to note here that Blanca's class is ethnically diverse, and one of the notebooks we're looking at is from an Asian student, and one Polish. Carlos is Puerto Rican. Kate says, "Are you-- you're assuming this, or...," and Carlos replies with, "No, I'm not assuming this." And the proof he offers is this, "Because that's what they were saying, what about tonight, when I go home?" This also, offers multiple interpretations. Perhaps they're concerned that they will not be able to enter their homework in the appropriate place, and that the teacher will be upset. Perhaps they care about grades, and will not be able to study. But Carlos has construed it as their fear of upsetting their parents, of being unable to offer "proof" that they're doing their work. He next switches the topic, and offers, "Some kids in that class have no notebooks. Some kids in

that class have no notes, have no papers, have nothing." This makes no sense as an appendage to the previous statement, but does relate back to his earlier claim as to the difficulty of collecting the materials. If he is claiming that students want to be able to provide their notebooks as proof to their parents, then this statement could be interpreted as implying that some of the students don't have parents who care to see them. When I ask, "Why?", he responds, "Cause they don't want to." Carlos has made knowledge claims based on understanding these students. The proof he offers does not substantiate his claims by our discourse conventions and norms; when questioned as to the students' motivations, he does not answer in the depth we think is appropriate. He is willing to offer his theories and beliefs, but he does not do so in the way that is expected (and accepted) in this group. He does not engage in the processes of academic analysis, nor does he engage in questioning/ reflecting on his own beliefs and interpretations. As I claimed initially, his reference point is experiential, and that is not privileged (nor heard) here. Without being able to make knowledge claims in the appropriate ways, and back them up with what counts as evidence in this environment, he cannot be heard. And certainly, as noted, the group does not engage in the sort of perspective taking nor reflection that might enable them to come to better solicit, understand and value his contributions.

This warrants further consideration. The theory on which this (University) class is based includes a perspective that sees learners' experiences and

knowledge as mediating tools for constructing meaning, thus the collaborative learning. The learner uses them to help make sense of new information (schema). Peers (classmates) also have access to these perspectives, and use them to scaffold their own meaning-making (Zone of Proximal Development, Vygotsky). In this case, Carlos does have experiences and background that would enable him to relate to, and learn from, the students in Blanca's class, and that could help his groupmates to make sense of this high school environment and experience. But because he is not operating within a genre that the others can see is appropriate here, he cannot recruit his experiences in ways acceptable to the group. He therefore denies both himself and his groupmates a valuable tool to aid in their understandings. He asserts that, "it's their writing, it's their understanding, it's their notes....it's their proof that they've done something in class... I don't know if any of you know that, when your parents say, 'open that book'...". Here he speaks as an authority, and draws on his experience to validate his claims. Perhaps the very structure of the group forces him to stake out an area in which he can claim authority. But this particular form of expression serves to shut off discussion and analysis, not enhance it. It is a take-it-or-leave-it proposition, and, because the group does not know how to take it up for further examination, leaving it is the most likely outcome. Had he instead been able to narrativize his personal experience in the language and structures more aligned with academic discourse, and offer it as one possible way to interpret the meaning of the notebooks (as Ruth does with her accounts

of her classroom), the group could perhaps have taken up the concepts, and negotiated them (coming to make meaning for themselves in the process). Compare his contribution to Kate's (sole) proposal, "They could make grammar rules where they could say that, but meaning, communicative-wise?". But the form Carlos has used has precluded uptake, the group does not look beyond the forms of language and the identity the speaker is claiming to find value in the content. He cannot frame his contribution differently, and they cannot engage with the style and language of his discourse. It is a double loss. He loses, and the group loses, a valuable opportunity.

When asked how Blanca responds to students with no papers or notes, Carlos responds, "I don't know how she handles that." The group (Ruth, Kate, and myself) request that he put that question to her, and ask the students why they don't have their work. Carlos says, "Why are you such a delinquent?" (meaning that that is, in effect, what he will be asking the students), which Ruth responds to by positioning herself as a teacher, and talking about one of her students who throws his work away. Here is an example of Ruth's contributions, which serve as a concrete model (again connecting theory to practice), offered up as grounds for a possible set of interpretations. She says, "Cause I have a kid who throws away everything that he gets (back)... (h)e said (it's because) he doesn't like it." Notice here that both Ruth and Carlos are in fact offering virtually the same contribution. They are both making a claim, and backing it by a simple statement from a student that is open to interpretation. The difference

is that Carlos speaks from an insider's knowledge of what's in the heads of the students (and the group members don't trust his interpretation), and Ruth offers it as an observation from the position of teacher (a position they have granted her). Further, she poses this example from her classroom as an entry to a conversation in which the group can postulate on the reasons, backed up by Ruth's knowledge of the student and environment. Again, Ruth has status here, Carlos doesn't, because the position she is claiming is more closely aligned with academic knowledge and practice than his. His, in fact, is aligned with culture and ethnicity that is held in low societal (and institutional) status. Now Carlos again speaks as representing the students, and the thinking that goes on inside their heads:

> C: It's your perspective of how you fit in society, so like, either it doesn't matter, what does this have to do with anything that goes on tomorrow...

One important consideration here is that Carlos is staking his claims on his professed understanding of the students' cultural values and practices. And we have no information about these, and have made an explicit decision not to gather data and information on these topics. So the group can neither repudiate nor verify what Carlos says, all they have is his representation of these things. Although I offer an alternate interpretation in this particular case ("...sometimes it's "everything I do is horrible, so why should I bother..."), the group has no concrete information from which to make informed interpretations. And again,

the meaning that the group can come to make from this exchange is bounded by the information available to them.

At this point, the group makes an abrupt transition to another topic, and begins the analysis of the transcript of the videotape. The learner performance conversation is tabled until the following week.

So lets see how the categorical breakdown supports the claims I've made as to positions and identities of group members in this meeting. For this meeting, I've introduced a new category, which I've labeled "proposal." I define a proposal as a suggested framework, concept, or theory for use as an analytic tool. For example, when Ruth says, "...the easiest thing to do would be to take different people with one task at the same time, and I think that the key issue for this analysis is the context...," that's a proposal.

Table 4. Characteristics of turns (4/28/92)

	Organization	Proposal	Request Information	Answer Request	New Topic	Number of Turns
Maggie	8	1	15	3	4	72
Carlos	1	3	6	12	2	82
Ruth	3	8	3	6	0	70
Kate	0	1	1	0	0	39
Huei Ling	0	0	0	2	0	13
Thanh	0	0	0	0	0	0

Remember, the context within which we're interpreting this table is that of this meeting, the search through the notebook entries to find a focus for the

analysis, for Carlos to xerox for the next meeting. So it is not surprising that Carlos has the most turns, as he has brought the notebook entries, and is in the position of representing them to the group. For the same reason, he answers the most questions. He is the only one who can supply the classroom context. All of his answers are practical, that is, relating to the concrete realities of the classroom and the students' lives. They are, in fact, analyses of the context of the work he is collecting, but the group does not accept them as such. His proposals directly represent the students, their family, and their inner thoughts (as we've already seen). And all of his questions are asked of his groupmates as to the specific materials they'd like, and who would like them.

I start off this entire segment, and try to focus and structure this event. During the beginning portion, while group members are looking through the transcripts, my contributions are mostly filling in timelines ("It was on March 11th that we videotaped that class."), and trying to connect groupmembers comments and reflections, in an effort to facilitate decision-making ("Okay, so you two have the same thing."). Upon closure, I then introduce the next subject, which is directly asking Carlos if he had interviewed Blanca. And throughout all I ask questions, as usual, to push the thinking and reasoning of everyone.

Ruth makes almost all of the proposals, because, as discussed, she has already thought about how she'd like to go about the analysis. And she makes quite a few, considering that the group is not yet engaging in the actual analysis,

only selecting material. She also answers the most questions, again confirming that she is in a position of authority and leadership, this is her topic.

Kate speaks a number of times, exploring with the group, but asks only one question, and making only one proposal (although, as noted, this was in a form closely aligned with the privileged ways of making knowledge claims in the academy). But aside from her one challenge to Carlos (You're assuming this, or..."), her contributions are mostly exploratory, and supportive.

Huei Ling's contributions are early on; she is intently combing through the notebook entries. And her turns are devoted to nailing down the dates of the entries ("March 11th" and "I have homework for March 17th"). And Thanh never speaks during any of this portion of the meeting.

The Analysis

The 12th group meeting, in which the analysis of learner performance is completed, takes place at my house. It is quite lengthy (about 3 hours). My analysis of this meeting will be episodic in nature, and serve to confirm and extend the issues and observations in the preceding chapters. It is in this meeting that we can clearly see the enactment of the patterns, roles and interactions which have become representative of the group.

All are present, although Thanh arrives late and leaves early. She is present by the time we begin the learner performance analysis, but leaves about two-thirds of the way through. Ruth begins this portion of the meeting by

focusing everyone on her outline, and Carlos hands out copies of the entries he's xeroxed from the two notebooks.

Kate immediately delves into the notebooks, and begins proposing observations and theories. As noted earlier, Kate's role can best be labeled "explorer," she enters the task whole-heartedly, from the position of a learner who is eager to engage in the process of meaning-making, but without prior claims to authority and expertise at stake. We will see, in this meeting, two examples of what I see as "true collaboration," by which I mean a truly exploratory chunk of conversation in which participants' ideas flow, meld, bounce off each other, and interrelate in such a way that the meaning made is among the participants, not offered individually. And Kate is central to both of these exchanges.

For now, she starts the group off, by noticing something interesting in the notebooks, which she throws out for consideration. She postulates that the form in which the sentences she sees are written indicates that the student doesn't understand the meaning. And I counter by trying to contextualize the sentences; I ask Carlos whether these are homework assignments, or notes the students have chosen to take. He doesn't know. So I ask whether Blanca ever collects, or corrects, the notebooks (in other words, is this a public or private performance for the students?). He believes she does not see them. So I propose, as a topic for discussion, the lack of feedback the students receive on their work.

Ruth, however, has been exploring the notebooks all through this discussion, and she proposes a different (and unrelated) topic. She is interested in the fact that all the exercises in the notebooks except one call for right or wrong answers, and only the one is "giving them the power to negotiate meaning." This is the same point she raised in the last meeting, obviously it is significant to her. Kate points out that this is different from the point I brought up, and there is no uptake on either of them.

Huei Ling, who has also been examining the notebooks, proposes a point of her own. She says the students are not "allowed to make mistakes," and there is no evidence whether or not they master the lessons. Kate builds on this, saying, "We have no way of knowing what meaning they're making out of these." Through these interchanges, Ruth, Huei Ling, and I are pursuing our own agendas, it is only Kate who listens and responds to each of us, and tries to collaboratively explore.

At this point, Ruth's guidelines have not yet been recruited. There is no governing or unifying structure, each individual is struggling to make meaning of the data on their own. The unifying theories, or commonality in the discussion, are seen in the language the group is using. This language is taken from, and directly reflects, the whole language perspective of the (University) class. In Ruth's proposal, she talks about the "power to negotiate meaning." The concept of negotiating meaning is probably the most powerful, and most often applied, of all the ideas introduced by the class. It is used in the syllabus, the Group

Project handout from Jerri, the large classes (in fact, it is the topic of one of the earliest classes), and throughout all the conversations and analyses the group has. So it is the first to surface here. And Kate talks about the "meaning they're making." Meaning making is another construction on which the class has focused. Huei Ling is the only one who rarely recognizably grounds her proposal in the concepts and language derived from (and privileged by) this class.

When Kate extends Huei Ling's proposal, Ruth pays attention, and asks for clarification ("For that one exercise?"). And Kate, to elucidate, recruits her experience as a language learner to make her point. She says, "...I know in my experience of learning languages you know what a correct answer, you know a possible correct answer without knowing the meaning of the question." She draws upon her experience to validate the point she is making. This is one of two times that we will see Kate use her past experiences to create a position from which to speak. But in both cases, they are isolated examples. She never explicitly refers to her language learning experiences again. However, it has made this point effectively.

I respond by recasting what she's said into a slightly more sophisticated academic language, again using the language privileged in this course.

> M: So you're saying, are you saying that then it's all drill and there's no room for any kind of creative language use, or for them to need to use the language for real communication or to make any meaning?

And Kate again extends this idea, and says, "And, actually, the attempt to do so might result in an error." And this is the beginning of one of the instances of what I am calling "real collaboration." The conversation continues:

M: Because that's not the expectation. That's not what they're supposed to do. That's right. That's a wonderful point.
K: And if they see something in their paper that isn't on the board, because it's their meaning, or their words, it's wrong, right?
M: That's right, that's right. If you stray, by one word, even if that stray might be because you do have the meaning, I mean, for example, like I can't see anything here... but if they substitute a word that actually might be better, or show that they have the meaning or whatever, but it's still wrong because it has to be this very specific thing. I wish I could think of a good example but off the top of my head nothing's coming.
R: Like if they live somewhere the bus doesn't go. So they go by taxi, or something like that.
K: or the 74 bus, or something.
M: Yeah, or do you get up at six, when the alarm goes off. You do? Or if my alarm goes off, or something. You know? Whatever.
R: Yeah, here, the only thing they need to negotiate is yes I do or no I don't. They have the option of saying yes or no.
M: Right. And again, Kate's point was wonderful, which is if they stray at all, even if it's right, it's wrong. Even if it's grammatically and communicatively and functionally correct, it's wrong.

Here is an example where, by collaborating, by truly listening to each other, exploring ideas, and coming to make sense by connecting and relating others' ideas to the notions they already hold, these learners build an interpretation that is more deep, and more comprehensive, than the proposals that any one made individually. Let's look at what happened.

Kate's previous contribution, "...the attempt...might result in an error," was picked up (by me) in lines 1-3. I define it a bit more, and offer praise and support. And Kate continues (in lines 4-6) to explore, clarify, and extend, then checks her perceptions, by ending with "right?". This tag serves the purpose of opening the floor to someone else, of inviting others into this discussion. And I use the opportunity to tie the conversation back to Huei Ling's contribution. Huei Ling had said:

> Seems from these students, not allowed to make mistakes, no room to make mistakes. ... you just put the word, and the correct tense. From these, we cannot tell whether the students really masters whether the teacher had been taught or not.

In lines 7-14, I connect Kate's point (even if an answer is grammatically correct, if it doesn't match the answer in the book, it's wrong), to Huei Ling's, and say, "If you stray, by one word, even if that word might be because you do have the meaning... it's still wrong, because it has to be this very specific thing." And I search for an example to clarify the point, but can't think of one.

Ruth immediately suggests an example, which, as we have seen, is a strong point for her. She typically illustrates concepts through examples that group members can visualize and apply. She's been listening, and is continuing to build the interpretation. She (in lines 15-16) gives a good, but very general, example, which Kate (in lines 17-18) extends even further, by using a very concrete, and local, example. Ruth refers to buses and taxis, Kate specifically

names the "74 bus," a local route. My next contribution (lines 19-21), brings us back around to Ruth's initial observation and contribution. She was looking at whether the notebook entries called for personalization from the students, whether or not the topics related to their lives, and called for subjective answers. By offering alarm clocks, and asking specifically when people got up, I related the general point about wrong answers to the specific issue of what happens when the specific topics don't correspond to the students' lives. And Ruth picks it up (lines 22-23), and again makes her initial point ("...the only thing they need to negotiate is yes I do or no I don't"). And I conclude by tying it together with Kate's initial point that launched the conversation, and then, in lines 25-27, I shift the overarching point into academic language ("Even if it's grammatically and communicatively and functionally correct, it's wrong.")

In this analysis, we can see many of the typical dynamics at work. We see Kate exploring, Ruth offering examples, Carlos staying quiet throughout analytic "academic" conversation, and me facilitating and rephrasing the conversation. In the end, we've managed to take diverse interpretive agendas and, through real collaboration, integrate them into a unified theory that all participants in this particular dialog helped to construct, and from which they are able to take meaning. As I said, this is one of two places in this particular analysis (learner performance) where this happens.

At this point, Ruth tries to revert to her framework for the task, by asking, "So, how do these learner performances compare? Are they identical?" But I'm

not through with the conversation, I want to make another point. I talk about the effect of all this on learner motivation, and defend Blanca by blaming these practices (formulaic) on textbooks and administrators. And this strikes a chord with Ruth, and she launches into a lengthy narrative about her classroom and students. It's amusing, and makes a point, but also serves to promote camaraderie amongst group members, as we laugh together. She concludes by saying, "Hey, that was such a tangent." I refocus the group by using the narrative to tie back to the earlier discussion on feedback, and this, now, triggers a connection for Ruth, who is able to use her own narrative as illustrative of an earlier point, and take meaning from it. She says, "So there's really no incentive for them [students] to do something creative, because they're not even gonna get a reaction." Here, Ruth has a realization based on hearing information when she was ready for it, and in a context where she could have access to it (relate it to practice to scaffold her thinking).

At the end of this particular chunk of conversation, there is a short silence. Ruth proposes, "I could go through my little outline," which is immediately accepted by group members. From this point on, it is the outline that structures the conversation. The topics considered, the language used, and the framework derive directly from Ruth's guidelines, which, as discussed, were constructed based on her interpretations of her readings.

Ruth starts with, "(W)hat kind of performance is this homework exercises? (sic)", and "What does this show us that the learner can do?" Carlos

asks, "Can do?" Ruth answers, "We're supposed to focus on what this shows us the learner can do." Ruth invokes a higher authority here, she implies that this is information we need to provide to someone else. And that someone else is Jerri. In her guidelines, she has said, "I would like the group to focus first on what the learners are able to do, rather than on what they cannot do..." Jerri's guidelines direct the focus. So this is what the group discusses. And it leads to the second example of collaboration, although this is not nearly as extensive as the first, and participation is limited to Kate and me.

M: Well, it's neat and sequential, and you know, orderly and legible and all that stuff, which is interesting because nobody ever sees it.
K: Yeah, they are. But, like, since some of them will run from the answers to the directions, like they want
M: the spacing
K: Yeah.
M: Which might have to do with knowing what's expected, but not making divisions by meaning
K: exactly.
M: Like the rest of us.
K: Like, formally, it looks fine, but meaning-wise it doesn't (make sense).
M: It doesn't, right.

Here, again, is an example of a conversation in which two people collaboratively explore, as they use each other's contributions to further their own thinking, and help to articulate and develop their analysis. In this case, Kate and I finish each other's sentences, and confirm perceptions and support each other by the use of "yeah" and "right." Of interest, also, is my first contribution here, because I directly claim, “Because nobody ever sees it.”

Carlos, we remember, has directly claimed that the students show it to their parents. This, then, is further evidence of the lack of uptake on Carlos' interpretations; in this case his contribution has been completely ignored.

After this exchange, I explicitly invite Huei Ling into the conversation. She has not participated in a long while, so I say, "Huei Ling, do you have anything to say? It just suddenly occurred to me you've been really quiet." But before she can answer, Carlos and Kate continue the conversation, and there is no room for her to enter.

At this point, Ruth gets serious about her outline, and focusing the group. Some of the issues we've already hit on address questions from the latter part of her guidelines, and we've not discussed some of the earlier ones. So she says:

> R: I mean, we're getting a lot of the later questions in here, so I'll, which makes it harder for me to write it because then I'll have to pull it out, so we'll try to, okay, the next, well, first we're gonna consider how the performances are different and similar, why do we think they're different or similar? The, we're gonna look into context- what's the context? How's the context influence the performance, is the performance in the same context as the learning? Which is interesting, cause it is. Or, well, as the classroom anyway. What was the scaffolding? Is it multisource? Continual? Periodic? Authentic? Um, authentic for what? What resources are used? What's the richness? How much knowledge and skills? This is all, like, we'll be able to answer this pretty rapid-fire. Um, is the input comprehensible? What's the relationship between form and content? What is considered important, and by whom? Issues of student-teacher perspectives and relations- how does the learner define the situation, how does the teacher define the situation, how does the teacher communicate her expectations, how is the meaning of the performance negotiated, what is the learner concerned about, what are the learners' assumptions, social and individual aspects,

> how automatic is this type of performance, and how much guidance and feedback is there from the teacher? So, with, um, some of these, so how 'bout comparative?

Ruth has just literally read aloud her outline, word for word. Unfortunately, this is not particularly comprehensible to the group. They have not done the readings Ruth has, nor have they put in the thought she has to prepare this framework. She has not defined any of the terms nor concepts, and they are unable to understand them, therefore they cannot apply them to Blanca's classroom to perform the analysis. Vygotsky's ZPD posits that learners are able to come to understand by scaffolding from a more experienced, or knowledgeable person. In this case, Ruth is so deeply embedded in her own understanding and framework that she fails to offer the necessary scaffolding for others to be able to even enter the conversation.

I am familiar with the terms, but don't understand what she's asking the group to do. So I say, "Comparative what?" And then she explicates, "Like, how are these two performances different, and the same?" This clarifies for me, but Carlos asks, "The two pamphlets we just did?" (meaning notebooks, I assume). Ruth then explains further:

> R: The two students. The work of the two students. Like if you look at the same exercise, in both notebooks, or just comparing both notebooks. Are they the same, are they different?

Here is this task in its simplest terms. And Ruth gets a simple answer. Huei Ling says, "No. These are not the same." This is the first contribution from Huei Ling in a long time. Like the last, it is specifically focused on textual analysis. This is a task she can do. It is more difficult for her to contribute to a conversation about the classroom, or schooling, since she is unfamiliar with the context of schooling and schools in this country. Therefore, for most of the exploration, she remains silent. In my field notes from 3/30, I report on a conversation I had with her:

> ... we talked about the group, and she expressed frustration, said she felt like she doesn't have much to say because the American educational system is so different than in China, so lots of times, like with the video, she has trouble putting what she's hearing and seeing into context, but figures if she listens a lot she'll get it. I tried to convince her that the group could benefit from hearing her opinions, since she doesn't take the same things for granted, it's a fresh perspective, but she doesn't feel this way.

And even with this contribution, now that Huei Ling has answered Ruth's question, Ruth takes up the question herself, and doesn't validate Huei Ling's answer. In fact, she contradicts it. She says:

> R: Well, some of them aren't, I mean, they're not necessarily in the same order. Like this one starts with the one this one ends with. But if you look at, like, this thing about Mr. Sands, that's pretty much the exact same in both of them.

Ruth apparently considers Huei Ling's answer to be too quick, and not deep enough. So she models the sort of answer she had in mind. She answers the question herself.

In a unique instance, Thanh intervenes with a question. This is the only time this happens, and it symbolizes Thanh's interactions with the group. She does not understand, and wants to ask a question, but the group members don't understand what she's trying to say. She says:

> T: I have a question. Uh, do we need to mention about the difference among the learner performance in the class, I mean, from this student to the other student, because as the level of performance deepen, from this one to the other one, it's not the same level of performance for all the students in the class.

Ruth takes this to mean that these two examples may not be representative of the whole class, and responds, "Right, but all we have is these two. So we're just comparing these two students." Thanh then says, "I think, in this class, there is many different ethnic backgrounds, so I think the best way is to compare, you know, like one person from one ethnic group." Thanh seems to be unaware that the owners of these notebooks come from different backgrounds, or is possibly suggesting that we don't want to compare students from different ethnic backgrounds. When Ruth says, "But all we have now is this, I mean," Thanh continues, "This is the only two." Ruth says (again), "Yeah. This is what we have." And Thanh says, "Like Vietnamese, Russian, Laotian." At this point, I tell her that these two students come from different backgrounds,

and she says, "One Asian and one Hispanic?" When I say, "Eastern European, and one Southeast Asian," she responds, "We compare two group?" And that is the end of her contribution. At best, she has not completely understood our conversations thus far. And quite possibly she is frustrated by the groups' response to her participation. In any case, this marks the last time she is willing to participate in any analysis, except the one for which she is responsible. She does not have the language skills to "count" as a group member (to make acceptable contributions to the group), and other group members are focused on completing the tasks, and are not willing or able to scaffold her participation.

Huei Ling, as usual, has taken no part in this segment of the conversation. She has, instead, been analyzing the texts. So as the segment with Thanh concludes, she offers, "It's very interesting, in the last piece of this one, the learner makes a mistake here, uh, the truck driver driving the truck." Thanh's contribution was not taken up, the group did not grant her the authority to make procedural nor analytic decisions. But Huei Ling's, which is her textual analysis, is immediately taken up. The group relies on her for this, they know her skills in this area are excellent. And it ties into the earlier conversation on errors, and Huei Ling's own comment, "...these students, not allowed to make mistakes. No room for mistakes..." And this launches a lengthy, and productive, conversation. All group members except Thanh search the notebook entries for errors, and enthusiastically point them out. They see instances where students have made errors and corrected them and others where they've let them stand.

The conversation moves to feedback: where and how do these students receive feedback, and what's the significance of that? All are brainstorming, proposing ideas, counter-proposing, arguing, and Thanh diverts me from the conversation, because she doesn't understand.

I give a lengthy explanation to Thanh. I tell her that Blanca doesn't correct the students work, that she has some of them copy their sentences on the board, and the others have to match what they have to the examples on the board. And if theirs is different, and they can recognize this, they still have no motivation to correct it, because Blanca won't see it. And Thanh still doesn't understand. At the time it is my interpretation that Thanh does not understand exactly what the practice is that I am describing. So I explain again that the only way a student can know if their work is wrong or right is by comparing it to the one on the board. And Thanh says, "If the teacher didn't correct on the blackboard that means the student have no way to correct that in their notebooks." This confirms that Thanh at this point comprehends the specific process we have been describing, but not the broader context within which we've placed that practice, nor our perspective. She is defending Blanca's practice, and not engaging with the critique. We, as well, have not engaged with her perspective, nor do we draw her out on this point. This, in hindsight, seems an appropriate cultural perspective, but we do not engage with it. She has directed all of these comments and questions to me, and I do not even bring it to the attention of the group, I deal with it as an aside. In fact, the other group

members have continued on with the analysis. I respond to Thanh, “Well, she doesn’t, she, I mean, there are other ways she could, but she chooses not to.” At this point, Huei Ling enters this conversation, with, “I think this is the reinforcement...”, and Thanh withdraws. By taking individual responsibility for explaining to Thanh, I have denied both Thanh and the others an opportunity to negotiate. I do not bring her issues to the group, the group does not exhibit interest in her understanding or participation, and she does not voluntarily contribute again.

Ruth refocuses the conversation, and draws the group back together, by saying, "If you'd just like to say a couple things about why you think they're different or similar..." I start to answer by saying, “Constraints of the task," when Carlos interrupts, and says, "Well, I found something very, very interesting, if you want to know." A proposal from him is unique, Carlos up until now has not made a concrete proposal, nor engaged in the textual analysis. But here we have another example of Carlos trying to engage, without following the procedural norms. His method of gaining the floor is not appropriate here. I counter with, “Who says it’s interesting?”. I am challenging his statement, and perhaps attempting to align him with the norms of the group by drawing attention to the form he’s used. On the other hand, this clearly serves to shut out his contribution, it denies him a voice. He replies, “I say.” But before he can actually make his point, Kate says, "There's uncorrected mistakes in both of 'em." She is answering Ruth's question, and cutting out Carlos’ contribution

altogether. Carlos is not granted the floor, he has no authority in the area of textual analysis. He tries again. "Do you know, " but Kate cuts him off with, "And it's the same thing. It's with the lack of 'is'," but this time, Carlos cuts Kate off. "I'll tell you one thing, Ruth..." Kate has not ceded him the floor, but he views Ruth as the authority here, and addresses her directly. And it works. Once Ruth listens to him, everyone does. And after a few turns, even Kate engages with his topic. It is not related to Ruth's question, but it is interesting, and important. He has noticed that the Southeast Asian student has some writing in her native language on one of the entries, and it's clearly translation.

After displaying what he's found, Carlos withdraws from the conversation. He does not take part in the analysis. I, in fact, supply an interpretation, by saying, "So there's the one evidence that there's some meaning." And then everyone finds the spot where it occurs, and discusses it. Here Thanh is enlisted, as group members try to uncover the significance of this act. She could be granted a position, in this case, as an expert in the Vietnamese language, were she able to conform to the modes of interaction engaged in here. I ask, "And the translation is the exact meaning in Vietnamese to English?", to which she responds, "Ummm...." She is not certain where in the notebook entries we are. But when I repeat the question, she says, "Yeah." It is worth noting that almost all of Thanh's contributions are solicited, and I am the only group member that does the soliciting. Even though I (sporadically) have conversations with individual group members about the sorts of expertise their peers have, and the

importance of allowing everyone in the group a voice, the others do not actively solicit participation from Thanh. This may be because when I do try to bring her in, she often seems not to be on task, does not understand, and requires lengthy explanations and rephrasings to answer questions. Group members are intent on producing, and these are delays that they don't want. Also, she has not produced much that the group considers productive for the analyses, unlike Huei Ling, who, although she too does not often contribute, has points to make that the group considers to be useful and insightful when she does. Again, Huei Ling's contributions are "academic" in nature, and the group sees them as moving the analysis forward, so they are therefore valued here. In this case, Ruth makes a point of being supportive of Thanh's contribution, by saying, "It's fate that we have that checked," and I say, "Thanks, Thanh!" But these sorts of acknowledgments and appreciation apparently do not encourage her to participate further. And this ends the conversation about that particular point.

Ruth again does an organizational move, "Should I go on to the next topic or do you want to continue to compare some stuff? I'm just trying to get through as much as possible." Here, again, is evidence of the pressure to get through the task. Kate makes another observation from the texts ("...but this person, it's incredible how few, like, it's perf-- so far most of it is perfect."), and starts to make hypotheses about what this might mean. I join in, but Ruth intervenes with, "Okay, what is the context of the performance?" Here she actually stops an analysis of a relevant and appropriate topic, because of her focus on following

her outline. This observation is not made again. The analysis, as I've said, is limited by Ruth's interpretations of what categories and topics are important.

In answer to Ruth's questions about context, Huei Ling, Kate and I brainstorm ideas. We say the task is "drill-oriented," "individualized," and "decontextualized." Kate searches for words to express the effect this has on the students, and, after her efforts, I capsulize what she's said by saying, "They're playing school." This is a concept I have brought up multiple times in our discussions. I have introduced a theory of David Bloome's, which is concerned with the meaning of students' displays in the classroom, and their knowledge of how to "play school." It continually crops up as relevant in our analyses. And one role that I have taken on is to introduce academic theory, and to contextualize the groups' contributions into current theory. Earlier in this meeting, Ruth has reminisced about a teacher she had in high school who called on students to put completed homework on the board. "...(W)e used to play Russian Roulette with that lady. Some days you'd (have no) homework and you'd sit there and just hope you weren't called..." And I say, "And then we're back to David Bloome, How 'bout me? Call on me! And you know they're gonna call on someone else. Cause you're prepared." In this early instance, there was no uptake. Ruth takes the next turn, and proposes following her outline. But this second time, when I say (in response to Kate), "They're playing school," she picks up on it. "Yeah. But still, people can play whole language too" (and Ruth adds, "Oh, yeah...") "...they can sort of play whatever." And she even elaborates

on it, "Or like there's probably be a few catch phrases that that particular whole language teacher'd really be into, and like you'd use that, and you, like, you tickle her, you know." And Kate even makes a connection to say, "Well, University isn't always that different from that."

There are three important points to be made about this particular interchange. The first is that Bloome's concept has come up repeatedly, with no uptake. It is not until learners are ready to hear and make use of information that they are able digest it. In this instance, Kate finally makes a connection whereby this particular theory has meaning for her. In a later episode (in this same meeting), the group discusses the difference (in Blanca's classroom) between form and content. Ruth offers, "Well, if you look at part of the content as what we defined before as being school skills and all that, you learn that with the form." Here, this concept is brought up again, and recast in a different context. It continues to be used, and the groups' understanding of it deepens. We have also seen Ruth come to comprehend an idea well after it has been introduced by using a narrative of her own, then making the connection. This is an advantage of this sort of collaborative, task-based work. Learning is not sequential, but traditional classrooms tend to introduce information in sequence. If a learner is not ready to access it at that time, it is gone. In this sort of classroom, ideas and information are recycled, they continually get taken up and recast, each time providing another chance for access, or to build a deeper understanding. This, too, is the strength of the readings. By virtue of being

constant, and continually available, learners can go back to printed text when needful. When this group needed guidance on how to structure the tasks, Jerri's guidelines were available. When they wanted "hard information" (what aspects to focus on for a specific topic), the readings were available. This argues for a knowledge-rich environment, with information available in multiple forms, in multiple places, at multiple times.

The second point centers on Kate's statement "Well, University isn't all that different from that." This statement actually echoes, if you remember, Carlos' point in the second group meeting, when he talks about the University, and "taking Jerri Willett's stock." But Carlos' statement was interpreted (by group members then, and by me in this paper) as resistance, and Kate's as a critical analysis, because of the difference in the ways in which the statements are framed and contextualized. This is a clear example of Kate's advantage in knowing the "right" sorts of ways to behave and communicate in this environment, and knowing, as well, how to align herself with the dominant mode of this group.

The third point is this: this excerpt, to me, marks a wonderful beginning for a critical understanding of learning and teaching. Through the analysis of learner performance, we have hit on an important dynamic in classrooms and schooling. We have discovered an idea, begun to explore it, tied it into an ongoing academic conversation, and applied it to our own situations. This is learning at its best. Unfortunately, in this case, the discussion is once again cut

off by Ruth, who says, "So is the context of the performance the same as the context of the learning?" Here is a double bind: the framework of the task, itself, has provided the structure by which the group can make observations, collaboratively explore them, and come to make meaning from them. On the other hand, the structure of the task within the structure of the school environment promotes this push to perform and complete the task (in the way the students feel is "expected," and in the time they have allotted), and discourages them from diverging from their agenda, even to engage in real exploration.

Here is another episode where the framework scaffolds an exploratory, meaningful conversation. All through this course, the term "authentic" has been used. It is, in fact, central to the notion of whole language for ESL learners. Ruth has posed, as one of her questions, "Is it authentic?" And Huei Ling responds, "No." I immediately counter with, "Absolutely! I'm sorry, I disagree," which elicits laughter from the group (they assume I'm kidding). But Kate thinks it through, and says, "(authentic) to school, or...?" She has understood my point. I follow up; here's how the conversation continues:

M: It's absolutely authentic, for that, for that, paradigm isn't the word I want, but for that model, and that perception of what classroom and schools are, it's as authentic as you get.
K: Right, right. The question is if that paradigm of schools is authentic to life.
M: Well, remember we had this whole conversation weeks and weeks ago about what's authentic.
K: Which basically renders it a useless term. Right?
M: But authentic in terms of representing any norms or

11 expectations of the larger society or culture, yes, of the
12 larger school society and culture, these are the games
13 they need to know how to play on the one hand.
14 R: It's not authentic for communication.
15 K: Not for communication, that's true.
16 M: I think language is for communication, right.
17 R: What resources are used?

In this excerpt, these same dynamics recur. In lines 1-4, I am elucidating my point. Kate has already shown some understanding, but I explain. I also tie back to the earlier discussions(s) about "playing school," as I imply that these are the ways students need to learn to communicate to be successful in that environment. Kate (in Lines 5-6), extends my discussion, and questions the relationship between schools and life. Again, this is critical learning. She takes a concept, abstracts away from the concrete situation at hand, and uses it as a metatheory to look at schooling and learning. It is a crucial issue, central to this sort of whole language perspective, and particularly relevant to second language learning. And I tie it back to an earlier conversation (in lines 7-8), again recycling and reapplying ideas. When Kate proposes (line 9) that "authentic" is a useless term, I again explicitly tie it to "playing school" (lines 11-13), and explain why it isn't useless, it's important. Ruth then offers a useful concept (line 14), she introduces the comparison between "authentic" for a given context, and "authentic" for communication. This could have led to a rich discussion about language use in the classroom, but again Ruth intervenes (line 17), to refocus on her guidelines.

The group continues through Ruth's list, and comes to the question of "richness." She says, "What is the richness of the context?", and the group laughs, to which she says, "Well, you wanna skip that one?" This is an acknowledgment that the term is hers, the group does not share ownership, and in fact members are not entirely sure of its meaning. But they attempt it, anyway. Ruth (and her guidelines) have the authority here; this is the way the task is done.

Carlos actually makes the first proposal. He says:

> C: No, you know, because for these kids this is their first time dealing with English. And the richness is, for some, very good. This Vietnamese girl is very good. She's getting a lot out of it. Some of these guys are, you know, translated, if they were born in the United States they'd be wise guys here... You know what I'm trying to get at? Some of those kids, no one's gonna do a good job with them. Some of them are getting a rich enough exposure.

Carlos seems to be speaking both out of his "knowledge" of the minority and language learning experience, and defending Blanca. He seems to imply that for beginners, this is good enough, they don't need rich exposure to the language and culture, and for others, the lack of learning is their fault ("they'd be wise guys...no one's gonna do a good job with them.") In other words, he's not arguing that these students have a rich exposure, he's arguing that they don't need one. And Kate asks, "What do you mean by rich? I mean, what's this Vietnamese girl getting out of this?" Carlos defends his stance. He says, "Um... exposure at least. You know, exposure." Carlos' proposal is not taken up. In

part, he has not taken the learners' perspective, in fact, he has demeaned them, which breaches the (tacit) code here. The group has also come to be critical of Blanca's methods, and Carlos has been unwilling to enter into any critique of her. But, again, a major issue is that Carlos does not know how to frame his proposal in the manner appropriate here. And even if he did, it is possible that the group, having positioned him as an outsider, would not grant him a voice anyway. Although he's spoken from what he perceives as his positions of authority, he is not granted a voice in the area of analysis.

At this point, I (again) invite Thanh and Huei Ling into the conversation. Carlos and Kate have discussed the Southeast Asian student, and begun to touch on something that I think could be explored (namely, that certain cultures have privileged certain ways of learning, and members of those cultures have learned how to learn in those ways). I feel that this is an area in which Thanh and Huei Ling have expertise, and therefore information useful for the group. So I say:

> M: Well, there's actually more than that. ...And Thanh can speak to this, much better than I can, but in certain cultures, particularly Asian cultures, this is the way, well, so can Huei Ling, I shouldn't just say Thanh, but this is the way, I mean they learn how to learn by studying something decontextualized, and it's how they know how to do it. And that it why very often the Asians will do better, than some of the other, you know, ethnic background people, and it might be that this is how she knows how to learn and this is exactly what she needs, and that she can get what she needs from this. Now, I would rather that one of the other two spoke to that.

And Huei Ling finally speaks from the position of a second language speaker, and shares her experience. But she does this only upon invitation. She says, "Yeah... this is (correct) from how we learn in schools." She validates what I've said, but doesn't offer her own insights. Thanh, to whom this was originally addressed, doesn't respond. So I ask Huei Ling what her reaction would have been, coming from her educational background, if in her teenage years she had come to this country and been placed in a classroom that was "very communicative, and small group work, and collaborative, and all that?" And she answers, "You know, I may not feel that that kind of communicative class, offered by a communicative approach, I would not learn more, you know, I may not feel that I learn more from that class."

Huei Ling has just expressed a fundamental problem, she has said that learners from certain cultural backgrounds would prefer a grammar based approach to language learning. I say, "Would you feel you learned more from this class, or the same?", and she responds, "...Learning English, that's also related to what you mean by learning English. Learning English is the learning of the English rules of grammar, or the way you communicate?" Now she's said even more, she herself articulates a distinction she makes between the two. She doesn't view learning English as defined by learning how to communicate in English, for her, that is only part of the whole. Grammar learning is learning English. And once more, I ask, "Which would you have been interested in?", and she says:

> H: I'm more interested in the communicative approach class, this time, I can say. Because I know a lot from American, Americans go to China, and when they taught English, they used communicative approach, and the students didn't like that. They said that, I didn't learn anything, I didn't know the language rules.

Huei Ling is saying lots of things here, some of them contradictory, and raising interesting points. She is saying she's more interested in communicative approach now ("this time"), meaning as an adult graduate student in the U.S., (and she already has a good command of the language learned by a grammar-based approach). This may be because, being here, she has a greater need for communicative skills in social interaction, but it may also be because she is temporizing. She can not say that she doesn't like the communicative approach; it is what this course is based on, what the analyses are based on, and what most group members are actively espousing.

She is acknowledging that students in China don't like the communicative approach, which was my initial point. But my question included more than a communicative approach, I asked about collaborative, small group work, etc. (in other words, a whole language approach). And Huei Ling does not address this publicly. In fact, I ask her privately. From my field notes (4/21):

> I finally asked her how she felt about group work, if she felt she's learning anything that she wouldn't if she were doing the same tasks individually , and she said several times that she's enjoying it. But that's not what I want to know, so I finally got through that I'm interested in knowing her opinion about the learning processes, and if everyone else's viewpoints and experiences stretched her interpretations, and she said yes, they did.

I interpreted Huei Ling's responses to be perfunctory (and polite). I felt that she would give me the answers she thought I wanted to hear. There are several other clues, however, later in this last meeting. In one instance, the group tries to differentiate between skills and knowledge. They are clearly privileging knowledge over skills, and saying that Blanca's classroom does not incorporate learning knowledge. Huei Ling says, "I think grammar is also knowledge." In another example, while the group is discussing the performance of the students, Huei Ling says, "Drill and practice make learning happen." These statements she is contributing to the analysis, and because this is not a social encounter, but an academic one, I tend to feel that she represents her beliefs here more authentically than in my questioning.

There isn't much evidence to know whether or not Huei Ling ever buys into this whole language approach, though I tend to feel from the above examples that she doesn't. Nevertheless, she finds a way to participate from the margins; one that allows her to engage in the parts of the work that interest her, that benefit other group members, and that enrich the final product the group produces. Her method and style of participating in the group focus on texts and analysis, she does not engage in process discussion. Nonetheless, she is a valuable, and valued, group member.

The remainder of this meeting is spent following the same patterns we've observed. The group grows ever more focused on Ruth's list (as time grows

shorter), and they apply and discuss the specific issues. There is one additional dimension. As they focus, and Ruth takes notes, trying to form the basis for a paper, there is a procedure operating which I will call norming into academic language. This has happened, to some degree, throughout all the meetings, but as the pressure steps up to complete this task, it becomes a noticeable pattern. As the group discusses a particular issue, they (fairly rapidly) reach some sort of consensus. And then their concepts are rephrased, transposed into the new language that is representative of the course. I am usually the one to offer this language, although sometimes Ruth takes this role.

Ruth asks how the meaning of the performance is negotiated. The group (primarily Kate and Huei Ling) quickly agree that it's not negotiated. But Ruth disagrees. She explains why:

> R: ...(S)he (the teacher) is directing the flow, and ...the students react by realizing that they have, I mean they are negotiating, they're not learning the meaning. She probably expects them to learn the meaning. But their form of negotiation is to do what they need to do to get the task done. ... it's a different meaning.

And I say:

> M: So what you're saying is that the meaning that's negotiated is the meaning of teacher expectation vs. student response, as opposed to the actual communicative meaning. Is that what you're saying?

I've rephrased Ruth's contribution, both to clarify what she's saying for the group, but also to couch it in more academic terms. I use the phrases "teacher expectation," "student response," and "communicative meaning." In this case, the group continues to discuss this issue of meaning negotiation. Kate joins in, with Ruth and me. We use very non-technical language, until, at one point, Ruth says, "So the negotiation is negotiating the meaning about the construction of the task and what the students have to do to fulfill the task, while the actual meaning isn't negotiated." She has now placed the discussion in academic language. But Kate does one better, and adds, "Right. Communicative meaning isn't negotiated." And this point became the capstone for the final paper the group produced on this topic. The last paragraph of that paper read:

> Overall, we felt that this performance fit in well in the context of the classroom. It did reflect the expectations generally communicated by the teacher. But it did not allow for negotiation by the student, nor interaction concerning the level or meaning of the performance.

For this last meeting on Learner Performance, we'll look at one more table of the breakdown of some of the functions that speech served during the meeting.

Table 5. Characteristics of turns (5/3/92)

	Organization	Request Information	Answer Request	Proposal	New Topic	Number of Turns
Maggie	2	11	7	23	0	180
Carlos	0	4	6	3	2	70
Ruth	14	29	4	13	4	144
Kate	0	2	5	19	0	123
Huei Ling	0	0	5	13	0	45
Thanh	0	6	0	1	0	23

This chart is somewhat difficult to interpret, due to the multiple sorts of contributions members made, and the number of types of speech events. However, it is clear that Ruth, Kate, and I took many more turns than the others. It is also clear that Ruth took the lead in organizing, and in proposing new topics. This was her topic, her meeting. She had the authority to set the agenda, and focus the flow of conversation. She also asked by far the most questions, but many of these were the questions that she read from her guidelines.

My questions took two basic forms: many in the early part of the meeting were directed to Carlos, to obtain background information to provide a context for the entries in the notebooks; and to push, scaffold, and clarify group members' contributions (i.e. "So are you saying then that it's all drill...?", "Does anybody...are there holes in that?", and questioning Huei Ling and Thanh on their experiences, "How would you have felt? How would that experience have been for you?"). I engaged primarily in "teacher talk."

I scaffolded in other ways, as well. When Thanh tried to intervene to suggest an alternate process, Ruth responded by saying, "Right now we're looking at these two things." In other words, she was denying her proposal. I said, "But Thanh might be right that that might be a point to mention. In the introduction, that could be put in." As mentioned earlier, I was the one to invite Thanh to represent her experiences to the group, and to help with the Vietnamese writing the members found in the notebook. I also tried, multiple times, to entice Huei Ling to represent her experiences and opinions.

Kate made no claim to a position of authority; she neither initiated topics, nor organized. But she participated fully with the analysis of the text, making a large number of proposals. She asked few questions, and her answers to others' questions were all to focus the interlocutor on the text, she pointed out where in the notebooks significant entries were made.

Carlos did not assume authority, either, except in the beginning, where he responded to my questions to represent the notebook entries. He made only three proposals, which we've already discussed. His proposals, as well as his new topics, were either inappropriate, or framed inappropriately, for the members' views of the conventions of this event. As an example, when the group is discussing how students in the class receive feedback on their journal entries, all are involved in the conversation.

H: I think this is the reinforcement.
M: That's right, she doesn't correct them.
C: What class did you teach at the Elms? (to me).

Here Carlos clearly changes the topic in the midst of a productive interchange. Although I engage with him on this topic for several turns, Ruth reclaims the conversation by saying, "If you'd like to say just a few things about why they're different or similar" (meaning the notebooks). She has moved on to her next question, the previous conversation has been prematurely ended.

Huei Ling does not organize, request information, nor propose new topics. She takes fewer turns than anyone other than Thanh. She focuses on the analysis of the texts and classroom practice. The answers she provides are to my direct questions about her beliefs and language learning experiences. But she makes as many proposals as Ruth, and virtually all of them are taken up.

Thanh contributes significantly less than the others. Her proposal is deemed inappropriate by the group, as we have seen. And her questions are almost all directed specifically to me, in an effort to clarify her understanding. When she addresses them to me, the others simply keep on going with their discussions; our conversation is on the side.

The structure of the tasks, in the end, did provide the framework which enabled the group to come together, establish ways in which they could work productively together, and make meaning of the course content. It additionally, by the end, normed them into (having the ability to use) the language and concepts the course privileged. But this was not equalized amongst all group members. This table, along with my data, provides support for the claim I am making that both Carlos and Thanh were marginalized by the group. Because

they could not follow the tacit rules for participating in this sort of school-based event (at least as constructed by this group), and claimed the "wrong" identities, forms of speaking, and bases for making knowledge claims, their voices were not incorporated into the discourse, nor did they gain the ability to enter into, and make use of it. They were constructed as outsiders.

In the final chapter I will summarize each participant's position and contributions, and how their communication and education work interacted with the curriculum and pedagogy of this classroom. I will outline some of the major findings of this study, and their implications for knowledge work in constructivist classrooms, and I will try to point to areas in which further explorations might contribute to these discussions.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

One of the debates at the heart of education today is that between constructivist and transmission pedagogies (see Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman 1995 for a thorough historical discussion of the critiques of traditional pedagogies). The former (Brooks & Brooks 1993; see Matthews 1994:138-139 for an historical overview of constructivism) defines learning as the active construction of meaning by learners through social interaction. The latter (Freire 1970) defines learning as the transmission of requisite "knowledge" from teacher to student. The debate hinges on beliefs about what learning is, and how it occurs.

The University classroom in which this study was conducted operates from a constructivist perspective. The underlying principles are that people come to make sense of their world through exploring and negotiating with others. This, in turn, engenders other educational beliefs: that learning should be task-based, learner-centered, and collaborative. I do not argue with these premises, although I would note that these beliefs are not prescriptive as to the specific structure and format of the classroom, nor the nature of the tasks. This particular classroom is one particular interpretation /application of this ideology.

At the start of this study, the compelling issues for me were how, in this sort of interactive social environment, learning was being defined, and by whom (as all participants may not have agreed on one definition)? What counted as knowledge? How was it recognizable? What was the role of "expert" disciplinary knowledge? I wanted to make sense of what happened, to see the movement students publicly made during the semester, to define the discourse that was constructed.

In the light of the theories that I have invoked to frame this study, students were collaboratively engaged in active exploration of new ideas and concepts for a specific purpose, within a specific context (Rogoff 1991). That was the structure of the small group component of the class, and the purpose of setting the task of analyzing a specific classroom practice. And the new (academic) theories they were exposed to were continually applied to a concrete environment (Blanca's classroom and practice), allowing students not only to come to understand, but to have unlimited access over time to these theories, so that they could access them when needed, and come to nuanced, multifaceted understandings (Brown, Collins & Duguid 1989).

There is good evidence that this occurred. Certainly students in the small group used language and theories from the large class and the readings in negotiating their understandings of Blanca's classroom. And many of these key terms and concepts (i.e. negotiation, meaning-making) were continually reapplied and recast, and held meaning for participants. They provided, as well, a common language and framework within which participants could work together.

But the dynamics and definition of the learning that went on are not nearly so neatly explained as these structural issues. In Brown's (1993) terms, this was a diverse, complex environment, with information, cognition and ideas seeded throughout, and distributed among members of the community. And, in terms of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1934:86), this ought to have created an environment where learners could come to "discover" and use these concepts as they were ready for them (within their ZPD). Certainly the diversity of the participants of the class, combined with the interactive structure, should have provided a "more capable peer" to scaffold this learning. And, indeed, there is evidence that this also occurred. In my study, Ruth's understandings of the texts

on learner performance filtered through to other group members. What they came to know was the available (in this environment) "expert knowledge," as mediated by/through her understanding of it. And they came to know it through direct scaffolding from her. As discussed, this was both negative and positive. Ruth came to represent the "expertise," and therefore this information was represented to the group. But, as shown in the analysis earlier, there was significant and important information in the articles Ruth read that never got represented. Therefore, her interpretations and understandings both informed the group, and constrained them.

The complexity, as I see it, is attributable to the fact that all learning takes place within specific social contexts, and therefore is subject to, and framed by, the existing social and political hierarchies. The "learning" that took place in this group occurred, by definition, through social dynamics and interactions, and these were influenced/governed by the sociopolitical realities of this environment. Therefore, it is not enough to say that information and cognition were "distributed" among members, because the implication would be that all participants had equal access to the requisite knowledge, skills, and experiences as needed. In fact, 'what' got represented was directly correlated with 'by whom,' and whether or not contributions were solicited and/or taken up depended in large part upon the identity and role the "informant" (the person serving to mediate new information) claimed (and was granted), and his/her status in the group.

One of the key arguments against traditional classroom structures has been that they privilege the already privileged (e.g. Giroux & McClaren 1986; Apple 1985, 1990). That is, that learners who come with the "right" baggage can easily adapt to the forms of language used and practices enacted in these classrooms, whereas others, whose home and community practices are not

similar, start out (and usually remain) behind. And these sorts of classrooms are criticized for the power/status relations embedded in and passed on by them, the preclusion of critical analytic and questioning skills, and the replication of political and social agendas that predominate in mainstream society.

A classroom that embraces a constructivist philosophy ought, theoretically, to remedy these problems with traditional pedagogies, to teach learners to be proactive investigators into their physical and social worlds, and to come to take some control over their learning and lives. These, it seems to me, are reasonable goals for education for all learners, especially when our communities and classrooms reflect such diversity, and the world (and economy) in/for which we are preparing students is increasingly more global. And these sorts of skills and abilities are especially crucial for learners who come to our classrooms from nonprivileged backgrounds, as they would be essential tools for coming to explicitly understand the social and power dynamics that shape their lives, and might enable them to begin to effect real social change.

This classroom, in particular, is a prime site in which to study these issues. It had a notably diverse array of students, in terms of ethnicity, age, language, and educational backgrounds. It was also preparing these students to teach ESL, that is, to work with a diverse body of students, with a focus directly on language and cultural issues.

So in this site it is particularly important to answer these questions: Did this approach and structure level the playing field? Did it provide equal access to learning for this diverse group of learners? What sorts of beliefs, practices, and language were privileged here, and were there opportunities to critically explore them?

One of the crucial considerations is that the learners in this class did not come as "blank slates." That is, although they came from multiple locations and

backgrounds, they all came with interpretations and understandings of knowledge, learning, and schooling. Despite their differences, they all knew that there are rules and power structures involved. And they all believed that the way to "succeed" was to identify these rules, and the expectations inherent in this environment. As discussed earlier, students' initial views of education collided dramatically with those privileged in this classroom (as represented in the talk, the texts, and the structure). And what happened, as already discussed, was that participants tried to map notions from the old traditions onto the new, trying to locate roles, hierarchy, teacher expectations, and status in this new environment. While this was unsettling, and provoked some anxiety and conflict among group members, it also created a space where they were forced to interact and negotiate, in order to be able to function.

So early on, group members negotiated roles and positions. The group came to have a clear hierarchy, and power dynamic. The bottom line was that those of us who came closest to being able to take on academic identities had power and status in this group. And that means that the concepts taken up and discussed, the theories represented, and the language used came primarily from us. And we tended to be the white, middle class, and/or more "academically competent" members of the group. The further a member was from having the ability to fully engage in "appropriate ways" in academic discourse, the less status and voice they held in the group. The problem with this was that it often served to exclude as "knowledge" what some students had learned in their previous life, work, and educational experiences, but could not formulate in acceptable academic terms.

Ruth was looked up to as the ultimate authority. She had done her undergraduate work in a prestigious East Coast college, had experience student teaching in urban schools with diverse populations, had already obtained

certification in another subject area, and had taken courses with Jerri (i.e. with this sort of format) before. Even though others had authority in certain areas (such as Huei Ling when representing texts), Ruth was in a position to validate their authority. And if Ruth questioned or doubted something, others deferred. But when Ruth made "suggestions" (decisions) they were virtually always acted on. And no one ever doubted the veracity, or relevance, of her knowledge claims.

This, in fact, is aligned with one of the most common critiques of groupwork: that group members come to rely on one member (deemed as "smartest") to do most of the thought-work involved in completing the task. And, although there is clear evidence that others in the group fully engaged intellectually, nonetheless their reliance on Ruth blocked, to some extent, the knowledge gains they might have made. This is apparent, for example, where Ruth makes the guidelines used in the analysis of learner performance prior to any group discussion on the subject from readings she has done, and holds no discussion of terms or concepts. Group members allow Ruth to determine what they should know about, and look for, on this topic. And I have shown that there were many important and relevant issues addressed in the readings that never became represented to the group.

And, as discussed, Huei Ling and Kate came to hold higher status, and have more voice, than Carlos or Thanh. They had the capacity to align their knowledge and thoughts with academic theory, and display them through academic behaviors and terminology. Huei Ling displayed the desire and ability to seriously engage conceptually with texts and theories, and Kate, like Ruth, had some experience teaching, another certification, and was in the final stages of her Masters work. They, also, could propose ideas, and be assured that the group would seriously consider them. Thanh could/did not propose ideas

without being solicited, and Carlos was met with doubt (and sometimes hostility) when the proposal came from him. We will look more closely at this shortly.

How exactly this hierarchy came to be is a crucial issue. My interpretation, again, is that group members who were most directly aligned with academic discourses (and the appropriate ways of displaying them) came directly to hold the most status (and power) in the group. And the further the participant was from having these ways of speaking, viewing, and acting, the less status they held. This is especially problematic as one of the explicit goals of collaborative learning is to validate learners' prior knowledge and experiences, and to have group members come to rely on each other as resources. In cases where group members' prior knowledge and experiences were not rooted in, defined by, nor articulated in academic discourse, this did not happen. Rather than these members coming to connect classroom knowledge with lived experience, and being able to offer those connections as contributions that bore directly on the work the group was engaged in, they were silenced. This is most apparent in Huei Ling's case, where she in fact claimed and was granted a strong voice in areas of textual representation and analysis (a discourse highly privileged in educational settings), but never in representing her own language learning experiences in a different environment (in China), nor cultural learning and adjustments as a newcomer to the US, and its educational systems. These latter categories would have provided invaluable information as the group struggled to make sense of the high school learners' perceptions, motivations, and behaviors.

Carlos tried to claim an identity within the group based solely on his lived experience (life, work and education) as an urban minority. In fact, as early as the introductions (2nd group meeting), he explicitly distances himself from academic discourses, stating many of the conventional critiques of higher

education, but not in academic language. He positions himself as an outsider, and denies the relevance of the work in graduate classrooms to the realities of inner-city classrooms. He says:

> ...I learned the hard way that you should not go into the classroom with a lot of passion because passion only takes you so far. You need those skills, sometimes, to recognize what's going on in a classroom. ... I think that the realities presented in most of these (University) classrooms don't reflect the realities in the modern schools, especially schools with a high population of minorities. ...it's also interesting that when I look at what's going on here, the topics of interest in these classrooms, are basically the topics of interest in this particular community, as opposed to, let's say, this same class in NYC...

Carlos has just told us that he's in this classroom because he feels he needs "skills," but that the work that goes on in this environment is not relevant to the learning that he wants to engage in, nor the environments he wants to teach in. He is positioning himself as resistant from the beginning. And, far from this task and participant structure enabling his peers to engage in this critique, and negotiate meaning from it, they marginalize Carlos. This resistant stance, and the claims that spring from it, are invalid here. In fact, two group members (Ruth and myself) try to argue with him and convince him that he is wrong. And we do it in academy-speak, that is, in a language and rhetorical style privileged in academic environments. I say:

> Everybody has theories and beliefs- about teaching, about learning, about language. And the minute you get into a classroom... you immediately start making decisions, decisions about what to do, what not to

> do... And those decisions are based on what you believe. And if you don't... find words and ways... to look at and examine what you believe, what your value system is... it's just this hodge podge, this method of trial and error. ...and so what I perceive the purpose of higher education and graduate work is... having different lenses... and then you can examine how you feel about it and what you believe then you start getting insights about what you're doing and why you might be doing it... and that's the way to improve your practice.

And Ruth says:

> ... we're getting a theoretical groundwork that can be applied to a variety of locations that, if it doesn't apply, then something's wrong with the theory and then you bring that back and reevaluate it, it's a process of reevaluation, based on collecting data.

This is exactly the language and ideology that Carlos has already stated that he feels is irrelevant to himself and the real world. And we out-talk him, he is silenced on this point. We not only don't engage in his critique, we silence it. And we, and our discourse, have the power in this environment to do that.

Thanh, who holds the lowest status and has the least voice in the group, is Vietnamese and a non-native speaker of English. As I have shown earlier, she displays a level of language skills that renders her unable to participate, because she cannot follow and partake in discussions in real time. The two examples I have of narrative from her (which have grammatical and lexical errors but serve their communicative function) are both representing prior knowledge. One is when she introduces herself, the other when she reports on an article

which she's read, and on which she's attended a tutorial. However, she doesn't display the ability to speak on a topic nor with any real understanding when solicited by the group in conversations. Yet, again, her knowledge of these students (she works with them, and one, whose notebook we examine, is Vietnamese) would provide invaluable information for the group. But the communicative mismatch is such that she cannot give the information in a way in which the group can accept it, and/or the group cannot solicit it in a way in which she can give it.

In addition to the identities and roles group members claimed, we need to look at the ways in which knowledge and analytic claims were made. Not only does the identity (and therefore status) that the proposer speaks from affect how groupmates responded, but so does the form and language the proposer uses.

Here is an excerpt where Huei Ling, Ruth, Kate, and I are analyzing a task which Blanca has assigned to her students.

H: These students...not allowed to make mistakes. ...cause he just put the word, and the correct tense, ...it seems to me we cannot tell whether the student really masters (the material).
K: We have no way of knowing what meaning they're making out of these.. (t)he exercise itself, is pretty proscribed in the range of answers which can be given.
M: So are you saying it's all drill and there's no room for any kind of creative language use?
K: And actually, the attempt of them doing so might result in an error.
R: Actually, I've been trying to work with that, because I assign a lot of this crap, and when a student does give me a response that's not proscribed but could be right, I don't mark it wrong. ... One kid did that in Social Studies and I was really psyched...

In this example, Huei Ling proposes a concept while analyzing a text from the class. This is an area where she is granted expertise, and, even though she does not use standard syntax, Kate immediately takes up, rephrases, and extends her idea. Kate displays use of privileged language here, both by transferring Huei Ling's concept to the notion of "meaning making," and by using the word "proscribed." I rephrase again, and push for further analysis, which Kate gives me, again invoking a topic which has been repeatedly brought up in the course (the issue of errors). And Ruth provides the ultimate link between theory and practice, by connecting these concepts (meaning making, errors, proscription) to her own classroom. She is providing evidence for the theory that they are building based on her experience and identity as a classroom teacher. This identity, while experience-based, is more valued in this group than that invoked by Carlos, which is also experience-based, but not specifically related to schools or education. In this excerpt, all four participants listen to, reflect on, and respond to each others' ideas, building a collaborative understanding. They display language and behaviors privileged in academic settings in general, and in this class in particular.

In contrast, here are two excerpts which display what happens when Carlos makes proposals.

> C: Well, it was very difficult for me to get volunteers to give me their notebooks. So if they feel that their notebook is the only connection between them and what's going on in the class... it's very important to them. ...it's their example for their writing. And it's their proof that they've done something in class where they're kind of, I don't know if any of you know that, when your

parents say, "Open that book, tell me what you did today.", you know.
K: Are you- You're assuming this.
C: No, I'm not assuming this.

And:

C: It's their writing, it's their understanding of their notes. ... Some kids in that class have no notes, have no papers, have nothing.
M: Why?
C: Cause they don't want to.

In the first instance, Carlos is proposing a theory to explain the significance of the students' notebooks. The group listens as he represents ideas and feelings of the students. When he offers evidence, however, by saying, "I don't know if any of you know that...," he is tacitly claiming to have this knowledge by virtue of coming from the same sort of background, and having had the same sorts of experiences. He is aligning himself with the students, and offering his lived experience as proof of his claim. Neither his language nor his identity is aligned with academic discourse. And the group does not accept nor validate this. Kate says, "You're assuming this," meaning that he does not *know*, he only assumes (or guesses). And, although he denies this, there is no further uptake, the group turns to another issue.

In the second excerpt, Carlos is again unable to furnish evidence for his claim. He makes a claim, and is questioned as to its significance. He is, in fact, invited (by me) to propose a theory/explanation. But he is unable to do so in the

ways acceptable to the group, and he responds with, "Cause they don't want to." Once again, this is not taken up. The group turns to other topics.

The two excerpts centered on Carlos are markedly different from the first one presented. In the first, group members don't challenge each other. Participants support and/or extend the turn before them, rephrasing and building as they go. They also tie back to concepts and language that they have come to appropriate and share from this course. Carlos claims an identity that is apart from and resistant to theirs, and infers that they can't "know" as he does. And this identity does not have allegiance to the same language and understandings. Others do not and can not share it, and they do not display a willingness to engage with it in a substantive way.

These social and communicative mismatches have severe implications for education, especially when this is a graduate class of ESL and bilingual teachers. These are the people most in need of being able to critically examine educational practices in terms of equity, social justice, and empowerment, both on their own behalves, and those of the learners they teach. These are the people most in need of strategies and pedagogies that give voice and validation to marginalized students and populations. These are the people that most need to directly confront attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate existing social hierarchies. The critiques of traditional education (that it fails to address and include issues of social justice) seem to be valid here, as well.

I should note that the critique I am offering here is not a version of Lisa Delpit's (1995) critique of progressivist pedagogies. Delpit argues that such pedagogies often "hide the rules" of academic forms of behavior, thinking, and language amidst a rich immersion in activities with little overt instruction. In turn, she argues, that this disadvantages those who do not already know these rules from their previous home, community, or school backgrounds. This critique is powerful and important, and applicable, in part, to the group I studied, though the large class sessions and the texts provided did supply important supplemental overt information. My critique, on the other hand, is based on the ways in which power and status (often based on previous experiences) can mitigate the effects of "Vygotskian mediators" ("more expert peers," in this case) in the "Zone of Proximal Development." This mitigation takes place both because the workings of power and status constrain the information the mediating "expert" gives or the "apprentice" takes in, and because they can limit the ways in which the "expert" understands and values the "apprentice's" contributions.

It is worth dwelling here, at least briefly, on what we might call the "politics" of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, because this issue has too often been ignored in the literature that celebrates Vygotsky's ideas as if they were inherently liberal, liberatory, and humane. In essence, for Vygotsky (see especially Vygotsky 1987: Ch. 6), in the ZPD, an "apprentice's" initial efforts are supplemented by the efforts of a "master" (teacher or more expert peer) in

such a way that the apprentice's efforts and the master's efforts together constitute a successful, integrated and whole performance (apprentice and master are my terms, not Vygotsky's). For Vygotsky, this process works, in part, because the master's interpretation of the performance is imposed on the apprentice's, or, to put it in a different way, because the apprentice's efforts are made to make sense based on the master's interpretation of what is going on, not the apprentice's. The apprentice's interpretation, almost by definition, can not be considered "correct," because, as a beginner, he is positioned outside of the community of practice.

We might call the master's interpretation of the joint apprentice-master performance a "grammar" of the performance, because it constitutes the values, norms, rules, and classificatory schemes under which the performance makes sense to and within the community of practice in which the master is a master. Vygotsky argues that, in fact, eventually the apprentice comes to understand not only his or her performances within the community of practice (e.g. an academic discipline like physics) in terms of this grammar, but also reorganizes and regiments much of his or her everyday (non-specialist) experiences and understandings in terms of these more "formal" understandings or grammars---for example, comes to organize and regiment his or her understanding of everyday physical experiences through the grammar of physics as an academic discipline or discourse, or comes to organize his or her understanding of a

dialect like African-American Vernacular English through the "grammar" of standard English learned in the classroom.

The political problem here is that these grammars of understanding are imposed by the master as a representative of the community of practice (or Discourse in the terms of 1996a) in and through a collaborative process between the apprentice and master that leaves large parts of such grammars as tacit knowledge, that is, not overtly reflected on and certainly not challenged by either the apprentice's everyday understandings or the grammars he or she has picked up from other communities of practice (see also Gee 1996b on Vygotsky). This is so partly because, as stated above, the apprentice's understandings are, by definition, outside the grammar of the community of practice (that's what makes one an apprentice). It is also partly so because in the Vygotskian ZPD understanding is developed in and through social practice and becomes part and parcel of automatic performance, and taken-for-granted and shared understandings. Another way to put this is this: these grammars are developed through a socialization or enculturation process in which a great deal is left tacit and not rendered overt. That is precisely one of their strengths--- no one can overtly explicate all the understandings and procedures of a community of practice, and such overt explication is not, usually, a very efficacious pedagogical procedure, especially for beginners. However, as in all socialization processes, these grammars are value-laden and ideological, that is, they imply that certain ways of being in the world, certain forms of

institutionalized practices, and certain sorts of social relationships are "normal" or "right," at least from the point of view of a given community of practice.

The master in the Vygotskian ZPD is a "mediator," mediating the movement of the apprentice from everyday understandings (or understandings based in other communities) to those in the new community of practice. The Vygotskian mediator is a "socializer," one who scaffolds the apprentice's performance and understandings (interpretations of what he or she is doing means) through taking it up and making it conform to the mediator's understandings, thereby imposing on it the grammar of the new community of practice. In this process of learning through scaffolded and collaborative action, much of the apprentice's knowledge is not conscious and overt, and much of it is never opened to critique. Indeed, this is true of much of the master's knowledge in many cases. And, indeed, the Vygotskian mediator can hardly critique understandings in the very process in which they are applied in performance.

The problem is that without our worrying directly about how ideological messages are carried as part and parcel of the learning process in the ZPD, about how everyday and other communities' understandings can be over-ridden and marginalized in the ZPD, and about when and where conscious reflection and critique play a role in the ZPD, we are in danger of reproducing many of the hierarchical and status relationships which we claim to want to undermine. The "everyday" is in danger of becoming "deviant" (as in "everyday physics" or "nonstandard dialects"); the grammars of other communities are in danger of

being subordinated as "lesser knowledge" (as, so often, teacher's professional knowledge is defined in educational theory as inherently problematic because it's "practical" or "untheorized," at least, in terms of the theories of the "expert").

The solution here is not to go to the opposite extreme and claim all understandings are equally good, any will do, and there is never any way to order them. Rather, it is to ask how Vygotsky's ideas can be supplemented by processes that encourage overt reflection, active critique, and inter-textual juxtapositions of understandings from everyday experience and other communities--- all without undermining the ability of apprentices to actually perform fluently in their new community of practice. It's a tall order. I cannot, of course, solve this problem here--- my point has been merely to point out how Vygotsky's ZPD, often used so uncritically, cannot stand on its own if we want to see Vygotskian mediators as agents of social change and not just the agents of the status quo.

There are dichotomies that exist in traditional pedagogies that constructivist pedagogies claim to remediate (or at least address). Not only is minority vs. majority at issue, but so are: "ivory tower" vs. real world; theory vs. practice; experience vs. book learning. Too often classrooms in schools of education perpetuate these sorts of divides, granting status (once again) to those most closely aligned with academic discourse. Teachers have lower status than academics, teaching less than research. Certainly the sorts of practices and tasks I've examined do break down and begin to remediate some

of the traditional divides. The class members are not only learning second language acquisition theory, they are seeing how it applies in a real-world ESL classroom, with live second language learners. They not only have access to ivory tower theories, but the voices of classroom teachers and students, as well. In general, this sort of classroom environment does away with dichotomies by providing access to multiple practices, multiple voices, multiple perspectives. This is, of course, built in by design.

This multiplicity of voices enriches the academic environment precisely by the variety of resources it provides. The questions I am left with are these: in an environment with multiple cultures, languages, beliefs and perspectives represented, how do we address status differences? How can we keep from perpetuating the patterns and behaviors that we inherit? How can we raise awareness of, and sensitivity to, voices significantly different from our own? Can we incorporate diversity? How about resistance?

It is my belief that we can (and must) find ways to address these issues within our classrooms. And I reiterate my belief that these new pedagogies are a vast improvement over the old, allowing for real meaning-making and critical thinking to take place. But how to incorporate these social issues is a question for which I only have some general suggestions.

The primary recommendation my findings lead me to should ideally be implemented at two levels. The first is that of the immediate practice. I would call for an explicit component to be built into the curriculum for all participants on

issues of status and power. It is tempting to look to the role of facilitator as the mediating device for these issues, and to recommend that learning about and confronting these issues within the group be explicitly incorporated into that position. However, it seems to me that without all participants coming to have a metalanguage and metaknowledge on issues around language, culture, and identity, they can not come to problematize and address these issues for themselves. While adding another component to this class may be problematic, in terms of adding to the complexity and the load (both the cognitive load and the workload), these issues seem to me to be both central to the content of the class, and crucial for teachers who will be working with diverse learners to understand. My recommendation, therefore, would be to treat this much like the other key concepts of the course-- present it as a theoretical, academic issue, and have it be the topic of one of the analyses. In this way, learners will afford it status (it's not just an add-on, or process stuff, but "counts" in the academic world, and has been researched and theorized), and come to situated understandings through applied use (by seeing how it plays out in a real classroom). This has the additional benefit of removing it initially from a personal level, thereby rendering it more "abstract," and less threatening. As an additional layer, however, the facilitator ought to be responsible for scaffolding connections between the theory and external applications, and the self-reflective processes of the group.

These issues should ideally be raised at a programmatic level, as well. They seem to me to be important enough to be infused throughout the curriculum, and to have a presence throughout all the work that teachers do. Only if sociopolitical issues become part of the academic framework can we hope that perhaps they may come to be part of teachers' conceptual frameworks for their ways of interpreting their own beliefs and practices. And, to echo one of the key points taken up earlier in this work, even in programs such as the one in which this class was situated, where various classes take up communication theory, critical theory, bilingual education issues, etc., change happens slowly, and teachers tend to fall back on old theories-in-practice even while coming to espouse new ones. So this sort of change calls for consistent (and persistent) effort, with innovation infused throughout the curriculum, and ideas and ideologies and pedagogies and practices modeled and reflected on and available in multiple modes, multiple times, multiple places (ready to be understood, drawn on, and built on as appropriate to the learner).

I would advocate, as well, for an explicit focus on academic discourse, although this would best be implemented at an undergraduate level, for all students. I believe strongly that all students should come to see how ways of using language, behaving, believing, and interacting are caught up in discourses (or discourse communities, or Discourses), and identities people come to take on as members of these discourses. And students need, in particular, to have the rules and norms of academic discourse unveiled. For mainstream students,

this both enables self-reflection-- to come to see how their ways of engaging with school and their worldviews have been shaped-- and to see how (and why) others' have been marginalized. And for those from "other" backgrounds, it both renders opaque the framework and practices that have served to exclude them, and enables them to locate their position vis-à-vis the discourse (as opposed to viewing themselves as "stupid," and unable to participate). This goes a long way toward breaking down some of the racism and stereotyping that currently exist on our campuses. For all students, as well, coming to understand academic genres, and disciplinary practices, as socially, historically, and politically situated and constructed, may encourage an enlightened participation, and preclude blindly imitating and perpetuating current bounded and/or exclusionary academic practices.

One facet of my work has not yet been mentioned. There are other research projects being done in similar classroom environments, by people with similar (but not identical) interests. There is a research community doing inter-related work, and our work informs each others'. The results are used, as well, to provide feedback to Jerri. The data from this study was collected several years ago. In the interim, strategies and interventions have been introduced to circumvent some of the recurrent problems. One of these strategies is that the group's facilitator, at some point mid-semester, actually brings in transcripts from previous meetings for the group to analyze. In this way, the group can actively explore their dynamics, and come to a better understanding (Bailey 1992,

Zacarian 1996). Facilitators have experimented with various ways of bringing issues of voice and power to the table for the group to focus on explicitly. And facilitators work together to reflect on ways to do this. By using these as sites for research, these strategies and interventions become part of the research data, and part of the ongoing cycle of invention, reflection and learning. And, as more students partake in the courses, and become interested in pedagogical and research issues around education, diversity, language, identity and learning, the community and discourse grows. And this is perhaps the most hopeful sign for the future.

APPENDIX A

COURSE SYLLABUS FOR

PRINCIPLES OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

EDUC II 697P
Tuesday 4:00-6:30
Spring 1992

Jerri Willett
Thursdays 2:00-4:00
545-3675/205 Furcolo

PRINCIPLES OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

All teachers have assumptions about learning and teaching that guide their actions and decisions. These assumptions are based on prior experiences, universal imperatives, and on-going experiences in particular social contexts. Mostly, they assumptions are implicit and often contradictory. Moreover, they are dynamic and change as we gain new information from the social environment. By making explicit our assumptions and their connections to practice, we can exert some control over our teaching and evaluate the consequences of our practices.

The course is designed to help participants accomplish the following objectives:

1) Articulate an explicit set of principles that can assist in making instructional decisions.

   We will consider assumptions, with varying degrees of detail, about:
   - relationships between social contexts and individuals
   - language and language use
   - learning processes
   - assisting learning
   - relationships between theory and practice

2) Articulate the ways our assumptions influence instructional decisions and the ways our practices influence our assumptions.

3) Critique our assumptions and practices based on information obtained from personal experiences, experiences of students and teachers in local ESL classes, experiences of the professor, experiences of colleagues in the profession who publish in professional journals.

4) Consider ways that to revise assumptions and practices based on our critique.

ACTIVITIES

I have selected a number of activities and opportunities to help us accomplish the objectives outlined above. These activities, which are described in more detail under class organization, have been designed to encourage you to actively construct your principles of learning and teaching by interacting with one another and with other professionals in the field. Participants will:

1) assist me in examining my own assumptions and practices.

2) assist cooperating teachers to articulate, examine, critique and revise assumptions and practices.

3) read about selected key concepts that have been published in journals about the nature of learning and teaching.

4) participate in activities designed to increase understanding of these key concept.

5) examine and critique your own assumptions and practices as you participate in tutoring,

teaching, facilitating or language learning.

CLASS ORGANIZATION

I have designed a rather complicated organization in order to coordinate the activities outlined above. At first you may find the organization rather confusing, particularly if you expect the class to be run in the ordinary way, but you will find that eventually it makes sense. The way the class is organized is intended to provide stimulation and learning opportunities for a heterogenous classroom community. The complexity enables me to provide for a variety of different needs and draw on the many resources participants bring to the class. Reading this document several times, should clear things up. The class is divided into four different phases: a) full class meetings; b) small group meetings with classmates; c) tutorials with me; and, d) individual activities outside of class. The following will describe in broad terms the activities that will occur in each of these four phases.

I. FULL CLASS MEETINGS:

Participants will meet as a full class between 4pm and 5:30pm every Tuesday. During this time, I will present my assumptions about teaching and learning, trace how these ideas have shaped my practice, and consider how they relate to the general discourse in TESOL profession. Experiential activities will provide scaffolding for understanding the key concepts presented in discussions and readings. Each key concept will be applied to such instructional issues as: creating learning environments, designing instructional activities, designing scaffolding, assessing learner's development, selecting content and materials. The following is the approximate order of the key ideas that will shape class discussions:

1. Whole Language as a professional theory and its place in the TESOL community. Feb. 4th. Read Rigg (1991), Wong-Fillmore (1991) and Brown (1991).

2. Negotiating meaning and participating in discourse communities. Feb. 11th. Read Bailey (1990).

3. Comprehensible input, i + 1, scaffolding and the monitor. Feb. 25. Read Krashen (1987) and Long (1991).

4. Learning processes: an experiential model. March 3rd. Read Hatch (1987) and Stern (1990).

5. Situated cognition and apprenticeships. March 10th. Read Brown (1989) and Tharp & Gallimore (1991).

6. The learning paradox and implications for creating learning environments. March 24th. Read Bereiter (1985).

7. Contexts and memory in meaning-making and language acquisition. March 31st. Read Ellis (1989) and Larsen-Freeman (1991).

8. Learner language: what it looks like & what shapes it. April 7th. Read Bereiter (1990) and Iran-Nyad (1990).

9. Scaffolding for linguistic development. For April 14th read Gatbonton (1988) and Enright and McCloskey (1988).

10. Learner strategies: scaffolding for metalinguistic and metacognitive development. For April 28th read O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

11. Selecting and scaffolding content. For May 5th read Baral (1988) and Snow (1989).

12. Empowering, caring and motivation. For May 12th read Noddings (1991) and Foss (1989).

II. SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

The class will be divided into several teams of five or six students each. These teams will meet from 5:30 to 6:30pm each Tuesday. The task of the group will be to analyze how learning is organized in a local ESL classroom and the underlying assumptions that govern this organization. Insights gained from the readings and full-class activities should provide ways of handling this. The process will be as follows: Data will be collected from the classroom by one of the members and brought to the team meeting. The data will be analyzed as a group, using insights from the reading and lectures where ever possible. Each member will be responsible for writing a draft of one the analyses. The draft will be revised carefully by the group. After the group's revision of the first draft, it should be turned in for feedback from the professor. The team will submit a portfolio with their finished analyses at the end of the course. In addition to completing the assigned tasks, it is expected that teams will help one another understand the assigned readings and class lectures and relate them to the group task and individual projects. In other words, you are each teachers for one another.

The group will decide for themselves how to proceed. You will need to talk about your ideas thoroughly before you will know what to look at and how. Don't worry if it seems like you're not getting anywhere at first. It takes time for the group to start functioning in collaborative manner and the intellectual playing around you do in the beginning will pay dividends later. You may also find that your ideas will change as we read and discuss key concepts in the classroom. Don't worry about intellectual conflicts. As long as everyone is genuinely listening to one another, these "conflicts" may help you develop your own ideas (either by changing them or making you articulate them better). Interpersonal conflicts are another matter and they need attending to by the group. It is important to remember that you are not only learning about principles for teaching ESL by reading, discussion and application, you are also learning about learning and teaching by learning and teaching with your peers. (You'll need to THINK about that sentence). In other words, you need to step back and reflect on these experiences. Even if you have a frustrating experience in the group (or reading articles or participating in class), step back and analyze WHY this is occurring and what it can tell you about learning and teaching. Then take initiative and do something positive to alleviate your frustration. Part of learning how to be a good learner is learning how to communicate your problems and ask for help.

Individual members of each team will need to select one of the roles listed below:

1) Classroom researcher and/or cooperating teacher: This person will be responsible for collecting data in a local classroom. Preferably, this person is a teacher who is willing to bring in data from his or her classroom for the group to analyze. If there is no teacher in the group who currently has a classroom, then a member who is able to spend time once a week in a teacher's classroom in Amherst should select this role. We hope to have a camcorder available for taping at least one class (and someone to run it). The analyses will include: a syllabus, course outline or textbook; a film (or taperecording) of teacher/student interaction; activity design and implementation; and documentation of student performance.

3) Team members: These persons will participate in the analyses described above and write up one of the analyses for the group portfolio. They may wish to visit the classroom if at all possible, but this isn't a requirement. These persons will be tutoring, taking a class or teaching and it is expected that they share their insights with the group as it seems relevant to the group project.

4) Facilitator and group researcher: This person is responsible for helping the group set up and get through weekly agendas and monitor the group process. Occasionally, facilitators will ask the group to spend time reflecting on the group process; however, they should not be in control of turntaking. They should intentionally hold back a little in discussions, but be willing to offer suggestions to help the discussion get moving, to stretch the group's thinking and to improve the group's functioning. While group members should look on their facilitators as someone to assist them, group success is not the facilitator's responsibility -- group success is a joint effort and one that needs constant vigilance, considerable tolerance and a sense of humor. Facilitators will need to meet together outside of classtime to compare insights about the group process and to share facilitation strategies. For their final paper facilitators will write a paper about the group process. To collect data for their paper, they will need to tape the group sessions and interview individuals. I will use this data to improve the course and figure out how to give groups assistance when they need it. You might find the data useful in monitoring your group process. The data will not will not be used to affect your grade. However, the best projects are usually the ones where the teams have collaborated well (usually involving lots of interaction and debate).

The group task requires a considerable amount of risk on everyone's part. For this to be a successful learning experience, we must build an atmosphere of trust and caring, while at the same time challenging one another stretch his or her thinking. This is a delicate balance, but it is the essence of good teaching (the whole point of taking the class). As collaborators and colleagues, we must depend on one another to give our best effort to the project. My experience has been, the more trust you put in your colleagues, the more likely it is they will eventually arise to the occasion. Sometimes they may disappoint you even though you trusted them, but if you don't trust them, they most probably will disappoint you. They'll either resist, maybe even sabotage, your efforts or let you do all the work. We are all teachers, researchers and learners simultaneously. If you don't find satisfaction in one role, try one of the others. The following is a suggested calendar for groups, intended only as a guideline:

January 28	Students meet in role groups: facilitators, cooperating teachers; tutors; L2 or FL language learners.
February 4	Teams set up agenda, talk about responsibilities and resources, negotiate explicit norms and expectations, talk about facilitator's role, decide who will be responsible for which tutorial articles.
February 11	Teams share general ideas and stories about tasks in classrooms, classroom interaction, syllabii, and learner language. Cooperating teacher talks about the specific class from which the group will collect and analyze data. Talk about strategies for analysis.
February 25	Teams analyze a syllabus, textbook, or retroactive plan of the class.
March 3	Teams analyze a task
March 10	Teams discuss group process with facilitator
March 24	Teams analyze classroom interaction
March 31	Teams discuss learner performance
April 7	Revision of syllabus draft
April 14	Revision of task draft

April 28	Revision of interaction draft
May 5	Revision of learner performance draft
May 12	Discussion of group process and its relation to task and learning.

III. TUTORIALS

I will meet with students in small groups on Tuesdays 3pm - 3:45pm. In these tutorials we will discuss the readings that you have selected to annotate. If you cannot attend the tutorial, you should contact someone who did and talk to them about your annotation. Each student should attend two of the tutorials and prepare the relevant articles. Your selection should be worked out with other team members so you do not duplicate your efforts. It should work out so that each assigned article is being annotated by one person in your team. To prepare for the tutorial you should prepare an annotation of the relevant article. Annotations should identify and clarify key ideas; give brief counter arguments, extensions or concerns to statements made by the author that you feel need debate or need highlighting; and identify ideas that you believe are relevant for the group's analyses. The idea is to stimulate a dialogue with the author, yourself and your team members. Based on the discussion in the tutorial, revise your annotation, photocopy it and distribute it to your team members. You'll need to get this done a week before the other students read the article so that they can prepare for class. The following is the tutorial schedule:

January 28	Students who will be attending the first tutorial will receive their articles. Others will receive them as soon as they come back from photocopying. I suggest that everyone look over their articles when they first get them so they can contribute relevant information to the group for the analysis. Then read them carefully before the tutorial.
February 4	First tutorial on Krashen(1987) and Long (1990). Prepare annotations and get them to your team members next class so they can prepare for the 25th of Feb.
February 11	Second tutorial on Hatch (1987) and Stern (1990). Annotations by the next class for 3rd of March reading.
February 25	Third tutorial on Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) and Tharp & Gallimore (1991). Annotations by the next class for the 10th of March assignment.
March 3	Fourth tutorial on Bereiter (1985). Annotations by the next class the 24th of March assignment.
March 10	Fifth tutorial on Ellis (1989) and Larsen-Freeman (1991). Annotations by the next class for the 31st of March assignment.
March 24	Sixth tutorial on Bereiter (1990) and Iran-Nyad (1990). Annotations by the next class for the 7th of April assignment.
March 31	Seventh tutorial on Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988) and Enright (1990). Annotations by the next class for the 14th of April assignment.
April 7	Eighth tutorial on O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Annotations by the next class for the 28th of April assignment.

April 14	Ninth tutorial on Baral (1988) and Snow, Met & Genesee (1989). Annotations by the next class for the 5th of May assignment.
April 28	Last tutorial on Noddings (1991) and Foss & Reitzel (1988). Annotations by the next class for the 12 of May assignment.

IV. OUTSIDE OF CLASS;

Participants will engage in five kinds of activities outside of class:

1) Read assigned articles and any other articles or books that will help you accomplish the assigned tasks. Assigned articles will be passed out in class. Other books, articles and resources are available on reserve in the library and in the ESL resource room in Furcolo. It is important to keep up to date with the assigned readings.

2) Prepare annotations of two assigned articles and attend two tutorials relevant to those articles. See "Tutorials" for details about how to write the annotations.

3) Prepare a draft paper of one of the analyses that your group will undertake. Revise the draft according to the group's input and type up the final version to be placed in the portfolio. This is not an individual assignment and your name should not appear on it, but it is your responsibility to do your best for the group. If you have done your best, you should not worry about letting the group down. It is their responsibility to help you.

4) Participate in one of the activities described below. Which activity you chose depends on your role in the small groups, personal needs and circumstances, and whether you are going for certification. If you are preparing for certification, you should make an appointment with Mary Jeannot to find out which option you should chose. Only facilitators should select #5. Only teachers currently in classrooms should select #3. Only those currently learning a second or foreign language should chose #2. In addition to participating in the following activities, you will also need to record your experiences in some fashion (field notes, taperecordings, journals, etc.):

1) Tutoring an ESL learner
2) Learning a foreign language
3) Teaching a class
4) Assisting in a classroom
5) Researching the group process

5) Prepare a final paper in which you articulate your developing theory of instruction and illustrate how it is connected to practice (as defined by one of the above activities). Your goal should be to explore those assumptions that appear to be particularly relevant to your selected activity, not to articulate a fully comprehensive set of assumptions. Your own concerns and curiosity should guide this assignment. However, you should draw on the ideas explored in the classroom, even if what you do is to argue against them.

GRADING POLICY

This is a graded course with an option for pass/fail. Grades will be submitted to the graduate office when students have completed <u>all</u> requirements and feel they are ready to be assessed, or one year after the end of the semester, which ever comes first.

These grades are determined by a qualitative assessment of work that has been submitted.

I do not expect that you will have a total grasp of all the concepts that were presented in the course (I don't know anyone who does -- researchers and professors are learners too). Nor do I expect that you accept the concepts that were presented. What I hope to see is a general awareness of the concepts and an appreciation for the complexity of learning so that you are humble in your prescriptions and assessments. I hope you will develop enough receptive language to be able to follow presentations in journals and conferences. I expect to see enough of a foundation to continue developing your own explicit theory of learning and teaching, enough confidence to analyze and use your own experiences and knowledge, enough understanding of the nature of language learning to guide (not dictate) instructional decisions, and enough understanding to know that published theories will continue developing and you need to continually update your knowledge of them. Finally, I expect to see that the level of experience and knowledge with which you came into the course has been challenged and stretched (this will be different for all of you because you all arrived at different places).

I appreciate and thoroughly understand that graduate students must juggle multiple demands -- including family, academic studies, often full-time work, and personal physical and mental health. I also appreciate that each of you come to the class with differential preparation and background competencies. However, it is important to yourselves and your profession that the course content and the quality of your performance not be compromised. Rather, in recognition of these demands and differential backgrounds, I try to be flexible with deadlines, whenever flexibility will not affect others in the class, and create procedures that allow students to resubmit work when students are not satisfied with their assessments.

I have full confidence that if you genuinely engage in the activities described in the syllabus, you will have no difficulties meeting my expectations for the course. I expect your progress to be developmental. This means that learning is gradual because you cannot know everything all at once. It means that confusion is a natural part of development, which according to many theorists, is one of the mechanisms that causes development. You are likely to have the feeling at the end, "if only I had known that in the beginning." But, if you had known it in the beginning, you needn't have taken the course in the first place. My advice is not to worry and do the best you can. If you need help, reach out to your classmates. But if you are unable to work it out, come to see my during office hours. Also come see me if you have difficulties "engaging" in the activities or if you don't feel challenged.

If you do not want an incomplete for the course, please submit your assignments by the following dates:

I. Group Portfolios: All work for the portfolios should be turned in together as a unit. Unless all members of the group agree to take an incomplete, this portfolio needs to be submitted by May 15th.

II. Individual Portfolios: To ensure that you do not get an incomplete, this portfolio needs to be submitted by May 15th. ALL work should be turned in together and all work must be completed before you submit. Portfolios include: annotations, a final paper and a questionnaire that asks you to state that you have completed all of the reading.

ASSIGNED READINGS

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Krashen, S. (1987). "Applications of psycholinguistic research to the classroom." In M. Long & J. Richards (Eds.). Methodology in TESOL. New York: Newbury House. 33-44.

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Long, M. (1983). "Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input." Applied Linguistics. 4, 2:126-141.

Long, M. (1990). "The least a second language acquisition theory needs to explain." TESOL. Vol. 24, No. 4, Winter, pp. 649-666.

Noddings, N. (1991). "Stories in dialogue: Caring and interpersonal reasoning." In K.

Witherell, and N. Noddings (eds.) Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Teaching Education. New York: Teachers College Press.

Nunan, D. (1991). "Curriculum Tasks and the Language Curriculum." TESOL. Vol 25, No. 2, p. 279-298.

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Tharp, R. and R. Gallimore. (1991). "A theory of teaching as assisted performance." In P. Light, S. Sheldon and M. Woodhead Learning to Think. New York: Routledge in association with The Open University.

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APPENDIX B

GROUP PROJECT GUIDELINES

697P Principles of Second Language Learning and Teaching
Spring 1992

GROUP PROJECT

TASK

The task assignment is to jointly produce an analysis of an ESL classroom in order to bring out the assumptions about learning and teaching that are operating in the classroom. The analysis will focus on four aspects of the classroom: the syllabus, a task, a sample of classroom interaction and a sample of learner performance. In addition to making explicit the assumptions underlying these four aspects of the classroom, the group should try to identify: 1) differing definitions and assumptions of learning and teaching between the students and the teacher and what effect this may have on learning and teaching; 2) differing definitions and assumptions of learning and teaching between the teacher and the evolving philosophy of whole language; 3) continuities and discontinuities between the teacher's assumptions and practice. In the final paper, you should consider what it is you have learned about the nature of theory and practice.

META ASSUMPTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

Here are a list of meta assumptions I've been playing with. Add to them, disagree with them, but please think about them:

Assumptions are both implicit and explicit.

We all have many contradictory assumptions and these contradictions show up in practice.

There is no a one to one correspondence between ideas and practice - because in practice there are multiple voices being played out both within the teacher and across the participants in the classroom. These participants include students, administrators, parents, politicians, voters, community members -- the list is endless. Therefore, you will always find gaps between "theory and practice."

"Assumptions" are negotiated during practice, so you will see that assumptions may change from one activity to the next.

Assumptions are based on our interpretations of our experiences, they are always open to change, there is no one interpretation.

GUIDELINES FOR GROUP PROCESS

Here are some ideas about group process that I have been playing around with. Add to them, disagree with them, but please think about them:

1. Think less about SHOULDS and focus with what is happening. Try to figure out ways to communicate to others if YOUR needs are not being met in a respectful manner. If you need help, talk to your facilitator. If you still need help come to see me.

2. Listen and pay attention to the needs of others. Negotiate with one another about how to meet needs that may conflict. It's not a matter of who's right, but a matter of what will work to enable you to complete the task in a way that enables everyone to learn something (not the SAME things, necessarily) and enables everyone to keep their self-esteem - even if it is different from yours.

3. Both process and product are important so pay attention to both of them.

4. Remember, we are all learning and one of the things we are learning about is that learning is gradual, there is great variation in the rate and route of learning, there are many different strategies, learners need to be in control of their learning, we learn by acting on our worlds and then adapting -- that means making mistakes...SO apply this to learning to work in groups.

5. Each group is different so what works in one group won't necessarily work for another, what worked in your group last time may not work this time. Use your previous experiences (and your principles) to help you think about the range of possibilities BUT you must attend to the contingencies and be willing to negotiate.

6. No matter how experienced you are, there's always more to learn because social reality is negotiated not fixed. No matter how inexperienced you are, you've been living for many years now in your own unique way and you will have learned something from it. Use and share that knowledge.

7. Have fun! If its not fun then something must be wrong. Learning isn't bad tasting medicine, even though its difficult at times. It may mean that you just need to look at things a little differently -- try the optimist's game.

8. The greatest difficulty I see students having trouble with is not REALIZING how much they are learning and how significant it is. This may be one of the consequences of always being assessed for what you don't know. While being critical is important SO is realizing your worth.

9. There's always someone who is going to irritate you and no matter how rational, caring or whatever you may be, we sometimes lose it. First, think about all of the strengths that irritating person has, zero in on the specific behavior that's irritating and then negotiate. Sometimes you'll find that they don't mean to do it and its just a bad habit. Then they might ask for your help. Sometimes they have a very different interpretation of the situation. Listen to their point of view and try to be empathetic and then negotiate. Sometimes, it's just you being intolerant. Think about ways to take your mind off it. Have the facilitator help mediate this -- unless its the facilitator that's irritating you, then come to see me.

10. Many of our ways of communicating and thinking are very deeply embedded and cannot be changed easily, if at all, even when a person wants to change. Many times they do not want to change even if they could. For example, the way one participates in discussions and groups is most definitely shaped by cultural and personal experiences. Be supportive and open, but don't force one another to behave in ways that they don't believe in or don't feel ready for. You'll get resistance either way, even though it may take many different forms.

READINGS

I've put together a packet of readings to help you with your analyses. How you use them are optional. You may want each person to summarize their assigned article (by you) for the others or you may want to photocopy them and each read them. You may want one person to read everything on one topic (i.e. interaction patterns) and recommend what others should read. In addition, you should draw on class readings where they are relevant. One way to do this is to have each member responsible for selecting ideas from the class readings for the analysis task (especially since everyone will have had to do this for their tutorial).

ROLE OF COOPERATING TEACHER

The cooperating teacher is the one with all of the background knowledge that you need to build a good analysis and should be a key resource person. But, the teacher's interpretation is only ONE interpretation and the idea of this activity is to get lots of interpretations. Keep focused on the data rather than on what you would like it to say. Entertain different interpretations and be open to the fact that you

may not have the evidence to be sure which is the best interpretation. And even if you do have evidence, you will probably find that your differences in values is at the bottom of your differing interpretations. You do not have to resolve (nor could you) those differences. Just state them and show how those differences affect the interpretation. Refrain from judging the teacher -- these are isolated events and incidents that will help us all to clarify our assumptions not examples of the teacher's performance. In real life a teacher is dealing with hundreds of different contextual factors, many of which are not even conscious. Members of the group will only know a few of those factors. Finally, processing moment by moment is NOT the same as having the luxury of thinking carefully about every little detail. Even a video tape cannot catch the subtle cues that the teacher attends to, nor can any human being be aware of the millions of cues that are available in the context. SO be humble when you do your analyses and be respectful of the teacher. It's very hard work.

GUIDELINES FOR ANALYSES

Syllabus

You should analyze a syllabus or general plan for the course, unless the teacher follows a particular text book, then you may analyze the textbook. If there is no explicit syllabus or textbook, then have the teacher describe what occurred over the course last semester. A syllabus is a general plan for organizing what will be taught, how it will be taught and how the learners will be assessed. In addition to content, a syllabus will indicate or the sequencing of content and activities. In your analysis you should ask the questions what, how and why and then infer the principles of learning and teaching that undergird the plan. Breen's article on syllabus design will give you a good foundation for the range of syllabii that have been traditionally used in ESL and give you the theoretical assumptions upon which these syllabii have been based.

Interaction

One of the theoretical ideas we will talk about this semester is that lessons are jointly negotiated by teachers and students. The way this negotiation takes place will reveal a great deal about what the participants believe about learning and teaching. Another key idea presented in this course is that the negotiation meaning is one of the major ways that learners acquire a language. The negotiation occurs at many levels of language: phonology, semantics, syntax, discourse, social and cognitive structure and strategy. In addition, the nature of the negotiation is affected by beliefs about learning, the evolving language proficiency of the participants, the nature of the task in which learners are engaged and the social roles that participants play in any event. The group should analyze a small excerpt from a transcript of classroom interaction. This can be small group interaction, teacher/student interaction in a conference or a full class discussion (the teacher will need to provide the necessary contextual background needed to understand what's going on). In the first round of analysis, the group should ask how is meaning being negotiated, what is being negotiated and who is doing the negotiation. Then you might discuss what impact this kind of negotiation might have on learning. Remember, this is NOT a representative sample of all interaction in the classroom, so your hypothesis about learning is limited to what impact this might have IF it were a representative sample. You might consider how you would test out your hypothesis if you were doing a full study. The articles in your packet are just a few of the different ways that SLA researchers have examined interaction.

Analysis of Task

As the course develops you will begin to see that tasks are the basic unit of curriculum development. What the students DO will determine what they learn and so tasks need considerable attention. In your analysis of a classroom task, you will need to ask yourself questions about the goals, input, activities, teacher role, learner role and settings. Nunan's article will provide some background knowledge to assist your exploration of task. In addition, there is another article about evaluating tasks in social studies classrooms. Both of these articles have some good ideas, but remember to think about them critically. We will be

discussing a few ideas in class that differ a little from how these authors think about learning and teaching. The major difference has to do with grading and sequencing tasks. Both of these articles assume principles of learning and teaching, some of which are not stated explicitly. You may or may not agree with their principles. I for one do not agree with some of their ideas. However, your task is not to evaluate the task, but to describe the components of the task, and figure out the assumptions about learning and teaching that undergird the activity and how these assumptions differ from the ones being presented in the class. The articles should help you in this task, if you avoid their evaluative language.

Analysis of Learner Performance/Product

I would like you to collect writing performance for this analysis. What counts as writing, performance or product is up to you, although I would like there to be a notion of assessment (performing to create a product that you believe someone else will evaluate in some way. There are many different ways to approach this analysis, depending on what kind of data is possible to collect. You could look at one person across different types of tasks occurring at approximately the same development point. You could look at one person participating in the similar tasks across time. You could look at several different learners performing in one type of task. Each will give you different insights about learner performance. Whatever the type of data you collect, it is important for the teacher to provide as much context as possible. I would like the group to focus first on what the learners are able to do, rather than on what they cannot do and I would like you to look beyond grammar. How are they managing to negotiate meaning, what resources are they calling on, what strategies are they using, what do they seem to be concerned about, how are contextual features influencing performance and how are they defining the situation in which they are performing. Depending on the type of data you collect, you should then ask comparative questions. How does a learner's performance in this task differ from that task and why? How do these learners differ from those learners and why? How does this learner's performance change over time. What kinds of assumptions about learning or performing (and the interaction between them) do these learners have? How does the teacher's definition of learning and performing seem to affect learner performance. The articles for this analysis are included to assist you in thinking about what writing is and how to look at assessment a little differently than you've been socialized to consider. They will not provide a framework for analysis, so the group will have to decide what to look at and how.

APPENDIX C

GUIDELINES FOR ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE

Guidelines for Analysis of Learner Performance

1. What kind of performance is this (homework exercises, test, writing sample, etc.)?

2. Try to focus on what this sample shows us that the learner can do.

3. Types of comparisons we can use:
   - one person with different tasks across time
   - different people with the same task at the same time
   - one person with different tasks at the same time

   Comparitive questions to consider:
   - how are the performances different/similar?
   - why do you think they are different/similar?

4. Issues of context:
   - what is the context of the performance?
   - how does context influence performance?
   - is the context of the performance the same as the context of the learning?
   - what was the scaffolding?
   - is the performance. . .
     - multisource?
     - continual/periodic?
     - authentic? (authentic to what context?)
   - what resources are used for the performance?
   - what is the "richness" of the context within which the performance takes place?
   - how much knowledge and skills does the performance incorporate?
   - is the input/directions concerning the performance comprehensible?
   - what is the relationship between form and content? what is considered important? by whom?

5. Issues of teacher/student perspectives and relations:
   - how does the learner define the situation?
   - how does the teacher define the situation?
   - how does the teacher communicate her expectations?
   - how is the meaning of the performance negotiated?
   - what is the learner (teacher) concerned about?
   - what are the learner's (teacher's) assumptions about performance?
   - what are the social and individual aspects of this performance?
   - how "automatic" is this type of performance for the students?
   - how much guidance and feedback is there from the teacher?

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